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FAMOUS CRIMES

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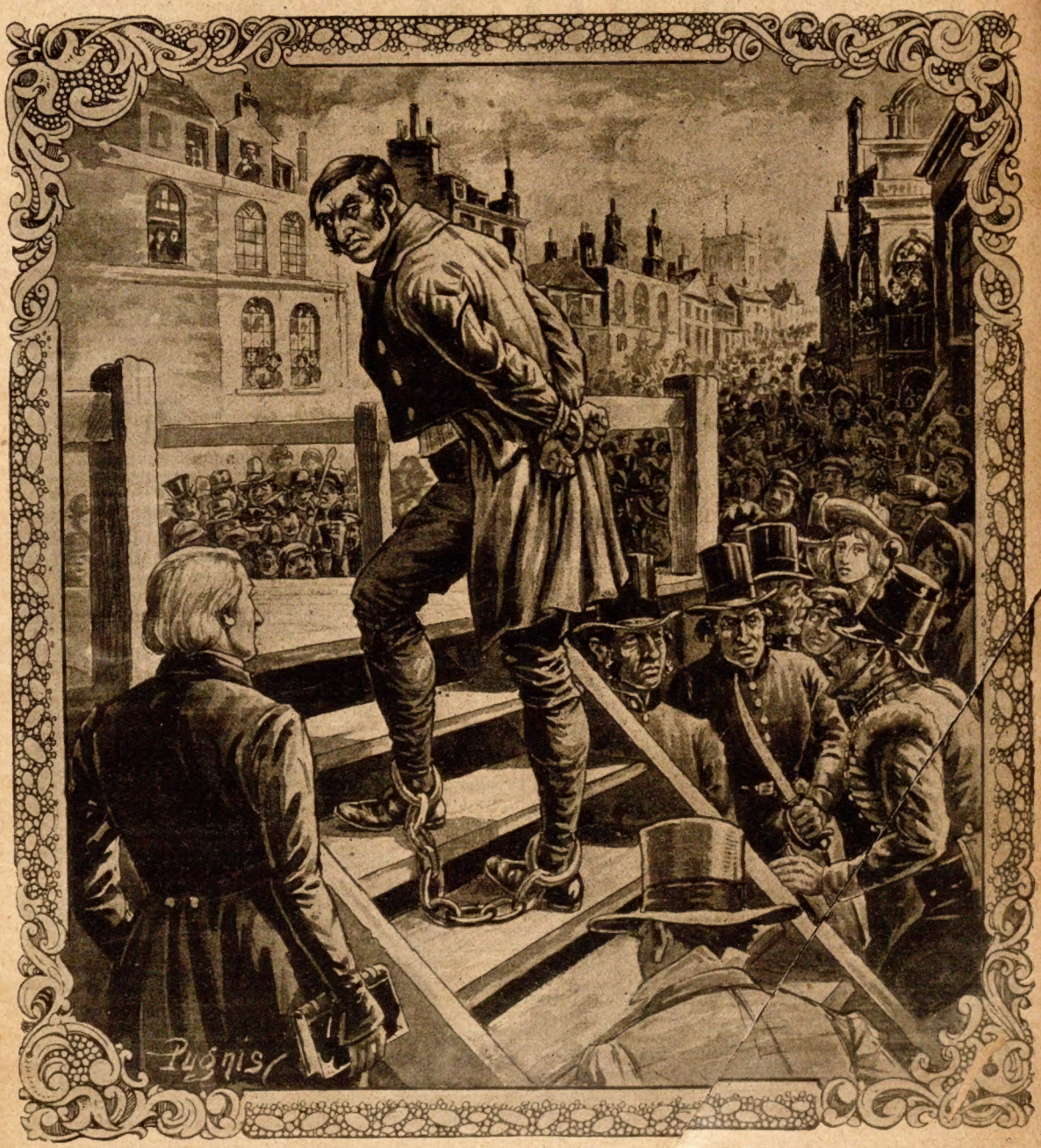
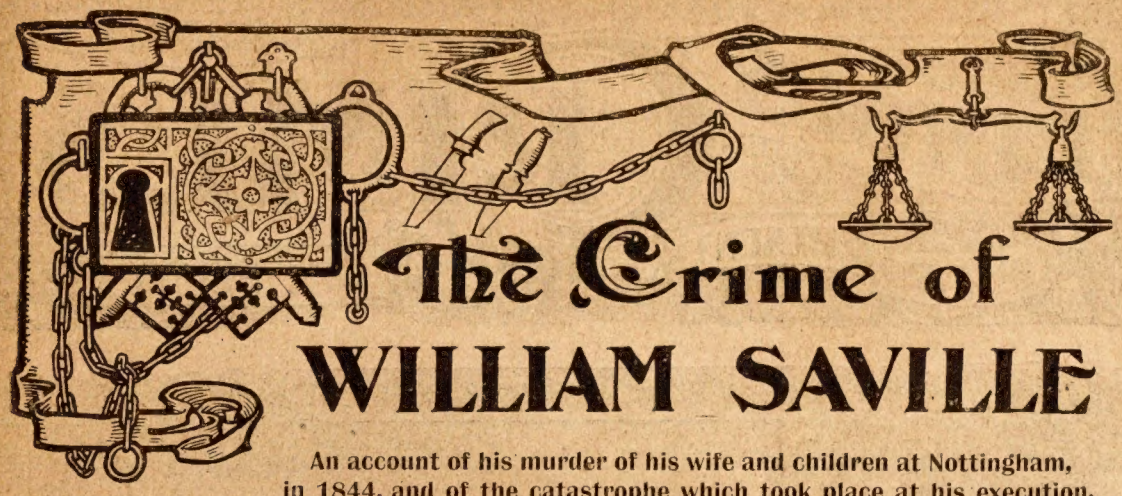


SAVILLE MOUNTS THE SCAFFOLD.

Vol. V.—No. 53.



The Crime of WILLIAM SAVILLE

An account of his murder of his wife and children at Nottingham, in 1844, and of the catastrophe which took place at his execution.

"Waft them to sleep, O winds, with your kind and benevolent breath;
Evil they knew not in life, and how can they know of the terror of death?"

—LESTRANGE'S "Life's Legend."

IT might be said, to paraphrase the original jest, that the worst use to which a man can put his wife and family is to murder them; but this reflection has not, unhappily, entered the minds of many gentlemen whose careers have been brought to a sudden end on the public scaffold.

Of the individuals who, like Mr. Saville, of Nottingham, have destroyed their better-halves and their offspring, a large proportion have been discovered to be insane, and have been consigned to criminal lunatic asylums for the term of their natural lives. But others—like the immortal Mr. Deeming, who stands out head and shoulders above his competitors in the same line—have killed their families in no sudden despair or uncontrollable frenzy, but from motives of gain or self-interest, and of these the person whose case we are about to describe forms a noteworthy example.

There have been other eminent instances of similar tragic affairs, and we may particularly allude to the case of William Bousfield, an amiable personage, who slaughtered his wife and three children in 1856, and expiated the atrocious deed at the Old Bailey.

Ten years later a great sensation was created by the murder of five persons—his nearest and dearest—at the hands of one Stephen Forward, alias Southey, a very brutal criminal, who suffered the law's extremest penalty at Maidstone.

Then there was the extraordinary case of W. Taylor, of Manchester, who murdered his children in the most mysterious manner in 1862, and the incidents of whose career have already been described in these columns.

Less well known is the Leeds atrocity of 1884, in which year a ruffian named Joseph Laycock murdered his wife and four little ones, and he found a worthy successor in 1895, during which year Robert Hudson was hanged at York for a very similar crime. As recently as 1902, a miner named Thomas Nicholson killed his wife, child, and another person at Spennymoor, and there have been several other cases of the same description.

The history of William Saville's crime is, perhaps, the most sensational of all these. It gave rise to tremendous excitement at Nottingham during the time, and is very far from forgotten by the inhabitants of that industrial centre. Indeed, the case is one of quite historical interest and importance; for a catastrophe occurred at the execution of the murderer which might be considered without parallel were it not for the appalling series of accidents which accompanied the hanging of Holloway and Haggerty at the Old Bailey in 1807.

Other incidents connected with the trial and punishment of Saville are by no means devoid of great interest, and the whole tragic affair is one which will well bear repetition, seeing that all the circumstances attached to it are very far from being generally known. The actual motive of this atrocious malefactor and the method by which he encompassed the deaths of his wife and children are still matters of doubt and mystery; but this account will go some way towards throwing a kind of belated light upon one of the most remarkable tragedies of the last eventful history.

Even so far back as 1844, Nottingham was a great and prosperous town. It has, of course, grown enormously since the day when Saville, weed-like, flourished, and great buildings have sprung up where there were only poor cottages and even poorer shops. But the intelligent and well-informed denizen of the famous "lace" town can still point to the spot where this miscreant resided, as he can to the place where, the cynosure of all eyes, he ultimately perished. There still exists a part called "Saville's Crossing"—so called after the infamous wholesale murderer—and on this spot another fearful crime was within an ace of being perpetrated many years later, which, as Kipling says, is another story. The old Shire Hall still stands, and its outward aspect has altered little since our "hero" was tried there; while the place of execution still remains to remind all Nottingham of the fearful scene which accompanied the death of the notorious offender. Nottingham races now take place in the immediate vicinity of the spot where the victims of Saville's barbarous deed were discovered, dead and blood-bespattered, and until recent years visitors were conducted with much pomp and ceremony to view the "precise place" of the "'44 murders." Other times, other manners; but plenty of "old inhabitants" could be found even now to indicate the site, and to show it to you with a half-comic, half-mournful kind of pride.

William Saville is always believed to have been a native of Nottingham; but I am in a position to inform my readers that such is not the case. He was born in the much-abused region of the Potteries—at Longton, as a matter of fact—and was brought to the big Midland town as a child of seven. His parents, who were hard-working and respectable people, continued to reside there till their death, which occurred, oddly enough, in the same year, namely, 1838, when William Saville was twenty-three years

of age. A promising youth, indeed, he must have been! He was by trade a stockinger, a calling peculiar to Nottingham and the district, and never at any time bore a very enviable reputation. He was, however, described as being "fairly steady for a stockinger," and as he was very

Threatened to kill her.

often intoxicated and was the reputed father of more than one illegitimate child, it will be understood that the ordinary "stockinger" was not exactly a modern Bayard without fear and without reproach.

As a matter of fact, this Saville was a ruffian. He was a brute by nature, and he seems to have treated very badly every woman—and they were a good many—with whom he had to do. I find a great likeness between this Mr. Saville and his more recent successor, the savage and lustful Deeming, execrated alike in Australia and this country.

But a certain class of women appear to be fascinated by savages of this unregenerate class, and plenty of evidence can be found to prove that young Saville was by no means without his amatory successes. He earned a good wage, being a really excellent man at his trade, and he was not averse to spending his money freely in society that was genial. He looked a good deal more than his age, it is true, but that was put down to the hard life he had led, and the women liked him the more because of it. He was of stout build—or so he has been described to me—and about five feet seven inches in height. His hair was thin already, and a little grey, and his sunken eyes and projecting, but intelligent, forehead gave him a general aspect that was a trifle sinister. His eyes were bright and black; his nose aquiline; the mouth large and sensual: the cheek-bones high, and the complexion somewhat sallow. He was always particularly neatly dressed, and is said to have set great store by his appearance.

Saville married his wife—and victim—in the year '35. She was a person of the name of Ann Ward, and does not appear, poor creature, to have had many personal attractions. In addition to being two or three years older than her husband, she had the further disadvantage—from a beauty point of view—of being possessed of one eye only, and she was of decidedly homely appearance in other ways.

However, she was not without her admirers in that rough district, where an eye more or less is a matter of little moment, and it transpired, during the trial of her murderer, that she had had one illegitimate infant before encountering her amiable spouse. This child had been put out to nurse in the summer of the year 1834, and Saville had been heard to express some concern as to its future. He made some remark to a friend, which indicated his unwillingness to work "for another man's child," and it may be mentioned here that he treated this unfortunate babe with the most systematic cruelty. Indeed, the death of the poor innocent may be laid at the door of Mr. Saville without doing that worthy man any gross injustice.

Although this scoundrel had always earned a fair wage, he had not been careful enough to save any money, and he quoted his poverty as a reason why he should not make the unfortunate Ann Ward his lawful wife. He had no great inclination towards entering the "Holy State," and was by no means eager to make a respectable woman of his mistress, who never ceased to importune him to do so.

Finally, her relatives came to her aid, and the flighty William was led to the altar. A married sister of Ann Ward's handed them £10 on the day of the ceremony, and guaranteed the payment of four shillings a week for the maintenance of the elder child.

Under these circumstances, this unhappy union took place, and, for a time, Saville worked steadily at his trade. He was always in regular work, and it is not recorded that he starved his family; but he entertained an unreasonable hatred towards the first child, who could not claim him as a father, and subjected it to the most fearful treatment.

During the period of their married life, the Savilles had four children, and one of these died in the Nottingham Workhouse as a result of its father's brutality. It appears that on December 28, of the year 1843, the ruffian came home to his cottage in a condition bordering on intoxication, and his first act was to seize his eldest born child and to hold him up by the heels until he grew black in the face. This piece of pleasantry had serious consequences, for the unfortunate infant had to be removed to the local infirmary shortly afterwards, and died there in convulsions. Thus was one of his impediments ac-

Carrying the youngest child.

counted for, and Saville now formed the idea of murdering them all. Some wonder may be expressed that this humane father was not prosecuted for his foul deed; but, unhappily, there was no witness of his brutality, and Mrs. Saville was in the cellar at the time. She rushed upstairs

on hearing the child scream, and the monster had time to place him in a more natural position. But she had seen and heard enough to guess that he had been ill-treating the boy, and she accused him of having subjected him to some violence. Saville at once threatened to kill her if she did not hold her row, and warned her, in the most menacing tones, not to mention her suspicions to anyone.

About this time, Mrs. Saville, it may be said, was suffering from some dreadful skin disease, which was not unlike leprosy, and it became necessary that she should enter the Nottingham Union, which she did, with the three remaining children, on June 2, 1844. What Mr. Saville was up to during this period has never been made clear; but it is quite certain that he was busy contemplating the slaughter of all his family, and that his designs for their destruction were carefully thought out and prepared.

His object was the same which has animated most murderers of his class, including Deeming. He was heartily tired of his present wife, and had met another woman of superior charms, who looked upon him with an eye that was more or less favourable.

"What has brought you in here?"

For some time he had been paying clandestine addresses to a Miss Elizabeth Tate, a rather good-looking young woman, against whose character, so far as I know, not a word can be said. This young person was somewhat flustered and flattered by the attentions of the sprightly stockinger, and there is reason to believe that he had proffered marriage, and that she had given him some sort of conditional consent. To this young female Mr. Saville admitted that he had children; but he airily dismissed them as being of no importance, and merely the results of a liaison which he had formed years ago, and was now prepared to break.

"They are illegitimate," he said—although he used a rather plainer word—"and their mother, my mistress, shall never molest you, my dear."

The murder of his wife and family took place on June 20, 1844. On that day they left the workhouse, according to the evidence of one Abraham Barnett, the master of the Union, and he stated at the trial that he had never seen them since. As a matter of fact, they returned to Saville's cottage, and were made rather more welcome by the husband and father than seemed compatible with his usual treatment and his ferocious nature. A Miss Lucy Wardle was a friend of Mrs. Saville, and this person declared that she called on the latter that day, had some conversation with her, and that the poor woman showed her some money, about fifteen shillings in silver, which had presumably been given to her on leaving the workhouse.

Other witnesses at the trial related how, on the afternoon of this same day, the Savilles were met going through Sneinton, near which part they lived, towards Colwick Park, where the bodies of the mother and children were subsequently discovered. The family then appeared to be on good terms, and the man was carrying the youngest child on his shoulder with every indication of fatherly care and affection. In the evening of the same day he returned alone to his cottage, and his wife and offspring were never again seen alive.

It becomes necessary at this juncture to state what occurred, which we are able to do in the light of subsequent revelations. Saville knew of a quiet and remote spot near the present racecourse where he could with comparative safety execute his atrocious design. To this place he led his family, and, arrived there, he asked the children to amuse themselves by picking flowers while he and his unsuspecting wife rested on a mossy bank beneath a large tree. When the youngsters were out of sight, he suddenly seized the unfortunate woman and inflicted a fearful wound in her throat with a sharp knife, with which he had provided himself.

She must have died instantly; and then the wretch proceeded in search of his offspring, whose throats he cut separately, afterwards carrying the bodies to the spot where their mother was lying dead and saturated with blood.

Near at hand was a quantity of undergrowth and thick bushes, and the murderer was able to conceal the corpses of his four victims in the brush and to escape from the place, unseen by mortal eye. He returned to his now lonely cottage and removed from his clothes and person all traces of his sanguinary deed.

A neighbour expressed some curiosity as to what had become of Mrs. Saville, and inquired why she had not returned with him from their walk; to which he replied that they had had some words, and that she had left him, taking the "bairns" with her. It was observed that he now had some money in his possession, although he was without any when he had left the house, and he sent out for a quantity of bacon and made an elaborate tea, with a perfectly light heart and serene countenance.

Some further inquiry was made as to the disappearance of his wife and children; but his explanation appeared to satisfy suspicion at the time, and it was not until the bodies of his victims were discovered that he was arrested.

However, this occurred only two days later, the corpses being found through the instrumentality of a retriever dog, whose cries attracted its master to the ill-omened spot.

The bodies were all huddled together, with the throats cut in the most frightful manner, and the woman's right hand clasped an open razor, which had obviously been placed there by the assassin, as it was not at all stained with blood, and could not have been used to commit the murder.

Saville now declared that his wife must have committed suicide after killing the children, and this was the line ultimately adopted by the defence; but no explanation was given of a blood-stain on the woman's dress, which exactly corresponded with the size and shape of her husband's hand.

But other evidence was forthcoming at the trial which conclusively established the guilt of this miscreant. A formidable witness appeared at the trial, who had not been examined at the magisterial proceedings. This was Private Henry Freeman, of the 32nd Foot, who happened to be in the local lock-up, charged with nothing worse than being drunk and disorderly, when Saville was brought

there as a prisoner. He was well-known to Freeman, and the following conversation ensued, and was overheard by one of the officials, who were entitled to listen to the conversations of those detained on important charges.

Freeman: "Hulloa, Saville! Whatever has brought you in here?"

Saville: "It's a curious case. They call it murder, some people do."

Freeman: "Who is it?"

Saville: "My wife and children. If I could have had three yards start, I'd have given them leg-bail."

Freeman: "Isn't there a report that they're drowned?"

Saville: "It's a lie, then; they're murdered."

To this same man the latter afterwards said: "Harry, you're my only friend, and I trust you to keep all this secret. I sent the children away to gather flowers, and I cut their mother's throat. The children returned, and began to scream. I was obliged to serve them with the same sauce."

that he had joined them by fraudulent representations, and they declined to interest themselves on his behalf.

The jury were only some eighteen minutes in consultation, and returned into court with a verdict of "Guilty," which Saville heard with great complacency.

The judge then sentenced him to death, remarking that the prisoner showed no sign of contrition, and the latter justified the comment by the flippancy of his behaviour. He glanced round the crowded court, ostentatiously making the sign of a ring round his neck, pulling up an imaginary rope with the thumb and fingers of his right hand, and giving a significant click with his tongue. And so, with a look of hardened ferocity, this quadruple murderer disappeared below.

The condemned man was confined in the County Gaol pending his execution, and was attended by the Rev. W. Butler, M.A., headmaster of the Grammar School in Stoney Street, who made unceasing efforts to bring him to a sense of his position, and to induce him to confess.

STRAPPING THE PRISONER'S ARMS TIGHTLY BEHIND HIM.

The trial of this self-confessed murderer took place at the Shire Hall, Nottingham, on July 27, 1844, when the famous Lord Chief Justice Denman presided. Mr. Wildman—afterwards Recorder of Nottingham—and Mr. Mellor appeared on behalf of the Crown, and the prisoner, who was quite calm and collected, was represented by Mr. Flowers.

No necessity exists for enlarging upon the circumstances of the trial in view of the account of the crime I have already given, and it only remains to say that the prisoner's counsel made a most eloquent appeal on his behalf, and that the defence was much admired at the time as a capital piece of special pleading. The learned judge appeared to be particularly impressed by Mr. Flowers's arguments in favour of the accused, and in summing up with strict impartiality, pointed out the utter inadequacy of the motive for such a horrible crime. During the trial, it transpired that the prisoner had once before been convicted for stealing a coat, and that he was a member of the society known as Oddfellows, who, however, declared

But the most that Saville could be induced to admit was that he had killed his wife "because she had killed his children," and in this story it is not possible to repose any confidence. He never fully confessed his guilt, and he went to the scaffold apparently impenitent, though he displayed great concern at the hostile attitude of the crowds assembled to see him hung.

Once during his incarceration, he alarmed the authorities by having a very severe fit, and he was not restored without great difficulty, after which he was again urged to confession by the chaplain. An attendant remarked that it seemed hard for him to be charged with four murders if he had only committed one, and added that he hoped he (Saville) would explain the matter to the public before he was hanged. To this the convict replied: "I will not, for they would not believe me; the mob would only hoot me." He displayed some interest in and anxiety as to the clothes he should suffer in, and eventually selected his own attire for the occasion. He slept well throughout the night prior to the execution—Wednesday,

August 7, 1844—and when the fatal morning arrived he ate a hearty breakfast, received the Sacrament, and prepared for the procession to the place where he was to suffer. During the interval which ensued between reading the two portions of the impressive service—which took place in the Grand Jury room—irons were placed on the legs of the criminal, and the hangman commenced his duties by taking off the stock he was wearing, thus leaving bare his neck and chest. The process of pinioning was then gone through, the executioner strapping the prisoner's arms tightly behind him. Before proceeding to the drop, he was asked if he still adhered to the statements he had made in his "confession," and he replied that he did; but he acknowledged the justice of the sentence, and seemed rather impatient at all this delay.

At one minute after eight o'clock the procession arrived at the scaffold, in front of which was gathered together an enormous concourse of men, women, and children. The crowd was immense, and the dying man eyed it curiously, nodding now and again to one or two persons immediately beneath him. He was received with a few shouts of execration, and one or two cries of "Murderer!"

THE CROWD WAS IMMENSE.

The place where the gallows was fixed must now be briefly described, in order to explain the nature of the disaster which attended this dreadful occasion. The scaffold was erected on what is still known as "High Pavement," and the roadway here is only thirty-five feet wide. Of this narrow space at least three yards were occupied by the gallows, and the way in which the bulk of the people would go home would be down High Pavement, which is a rather steep descent, on a curve, without any outlet until Garner's Hill is reached. This spot is some hundred and fifty yards from the Shire Hall, and here the roadway had narrowed of late years. The place was a veritable deathtrap, and no worse one or more dangerous could have been selected for a public execution.

The prisoner turned his face towards Hollow Stone—the name of a place cut through the rock, leading towards the London Road—and thus he stood until the bolt was drawn. He died easily, and a little later the corpse was cut down, amidst the excited huzzas of the multitude, who then proceeded to disperse.

And now commenced some frightful and heartrending scenes, for which the authorities themselves cannot be held entirely blameless. The huge concourse began to sway from one side to another, and the weaker, as usual, went to the wall. The houses on High Pavement had all been closed in view of the congested nature of the crowded streets, and persons were crushed against them, with no possible means of escape. Down the slope towards Garner's Hill the mob rushed blindly, the people behind being unable to halt, being themselves pushed on by an endless crowd behind them. Twelve persons were actually crushed to death, and more than a hundred, of whom five died subsequently, received serious injuries. Women suffered in particular, and their shrieks for assistance, which could not be given, were piteous to hear. Now and again some fainting female was passed from hand to hand over the heads and shoulders of the throng, and many actually walked to safety in this manner. Many persons had their clothing torn from their backs, and a vast quantity of hats and cloaks, and even dresses, was picked up later, when the crush was over and the peril at an end. James Fisher, a young man of twenty-two, and the son of a respected publican of Bulwell, deserves especial mention. The poor fellow had rescued two girls at the risk of his own life, and was actively assisting a third, when he was overwhelmed with numbers, and himself literally trodden to death.

Altogether, the "Battle of Garner's Hill" was a ghastly business, and almost without parallel in this country. But the disaster was not without its recompense, for it assisted largely towards the abolition of public executions, for which some people were even then clamouring, and which became extinct a few years later.

LIVING BY PAWNING.

HOW THE "MOSKER" MAKES HIS MONEY.

THE man who lends money has always been a victim of the gentleman whose brains turn to nefarious ends. The very idea of advancing a certain amount of the coin of the realm on an article is charming to those people who have habitually to avail themselves of the services of "uncle," and if these persons can once in a way get the better of the obliging relative they feel that they have attained fame. There was a time when any uneducated youth could become a pawnbroker, and it was long before the gentleman with brains found out that he knew more about the value of articles than the professional valuer did. That was the era when the gentle art of "mosking" was born.

Nowadays the pawnbrokers know a good deal, and the criminal has to be smart indeed who is able to obtain more than two-thirds of the wholesale price of the article which he offers as security. Still, there is a good deal of nefarious pawning done, and done with the utmost brazenness. The man who pawns an article is usually temporarily in difficulties. He is a genuine pawner, but there exists a large class of people who pawn for profit, a class totally distinct from those who pawn for a loss. These people are called "moskers."

There are two classes of "moskers." First come those who are known to the trade as "straight moskers." Men of this class deal with articles which are genuine of their kind, but are specially made up for pawning purposes. For instance, a diamond dealer gets hold of a parcel of diamonds which are not of the first water and which would not do for the West-end market. He mounts these jewels in rings, and thus adds a little to their value; then he looks round for a means of disposing of them. The inhabitants of the West End buy only the best class of diamond jewellery or buy none at all, consequently there is little chance of disposing of the parcel in the aristocratic quarter. To attempt to sell second-rate diamonds to any of the East-end jewellers would result in the manufacturer getting about one per cent. profit on the cost of production, for in the East people do not pay large prices. But the dealer knows a way out of his trouble. He applies to a "mosker" who is perfectly cognisant with the rates of many pawnbrokers, and offers him a commission on the amount he brings in as the result of his operations. The "mosker" takes the jewellery, and his experience tells him what "uncles" are unsuspecting, and to these he applies. The temporary relative possibly is not a very good judge of stones, and he makes little ado about lending an amount on the stones which is far in advance of the amount which they ought to fetch in the open market, or which would give a fair profit on the cost of production. The "mosker" returns to his patron and gives an account of his stewardship. This operation is perfectly legitimate though it may not come within the strict bounds of honesty. But there is another class of mosking which is really nothing more than an ingenious form of swindling.

Individuals who follow that nefarious profession are known as "snide moskers." The great object of their life is to foist off on some pawnbroker an article which is not all that it seems to be. Here is a sample of the modus operandi of the "snide mosker." A well dressed individual enters a pawnbroker's shop and, detaching from his waistcoat a heavy gold chain, passes it over the counter and asks the man of tickets how much he will advance upon it. "Uncle" looks at the chain. To the eye it is all real gold, and it is put into the scales and weighed. To make sure of the quality the pawnbroker applies the acid test to one of the links of the chain, and finds that the gold is of the standard stated. Accordingly the advance is made. But the "mosker" knows that he has made a profit. Every alternate link in the chain is composed of a base metal of sufficient weight to tally with the other links. Thus the poor pawnbroker has advanced money on an article which is of far less value than the sum which he has lent upon it. The "mosker" has scored.

But you will ask, what does the swindler do if the pawnbroker applies his acid to one of the base links? Should the man behind the counter inform the "mosker" that the test has revealed to him the fact that the chain is not of gold, but of base metal, Mr. Mosker makes out that he has been far more hardly used than the pawnbroker, as he had bought the chain to oblige a friend.

The biggest attempted coup of the snide mosker was when the process for constructing what are now known as "gold filled" articles was discovered. The invention was, of course, American, and a party of rogues took it up and prepared a large number of gold filled watches, which had all the appearance of being good, heavy, gold chronometers, worth about £20 each. Sixteen hundred of these prepared articles were brought over to this country for uncle's benefit, and a very great portion of them were pledged in Liverpool and other northern towns for sums varying from four to six pounds. There is little doubt that the whole consignment would have been unloaded on the pledge market but for an anonymous letter which was sent to the Goldsmiths' Company. At first that body refused to act, but the receipt of another similar letter led to inquiries being made, and several of the watches were sent up to London by the pawnbrokers. The Goldsmiths' Company found that they were hall-marked in the usual way, but when more carefully examined it was proved that only a thin shell of gold covered the cases, the interior of which was of base metal. The goods were worth about sixteen shillings each wholesale. Further inquiries revealed that a party of five American moskers were at the bottom of the swindle, but the same hand that wrote to the Goldsmiths' Company had informed the snide moskers that the game was up, and they had fled the country.

The discovery of the method of making "doublets" led to a good many losses on the part of the accommodating Hebrews. A "doublet" is composed of a piece of crystal, behind which is cemented the thinnest possible layer of some precious stone which the doublet is intended to represent. In the dim light of a pawnbroker's shop the compound jewel has all the appearance of a genuine stone, and advances were frequently made upon these gems.

Emeralds have been manufactured by a secret process of such exceeding hardness that they would withstand the test of filing. A real emerald cannot be scratched with a file, and this being the test usually employed, it is easy to understand what a rich harvest the mosker reaped. Some clever jeweller, however, pointed out to the public at large the fact that an emerald without a flaw of some kind is exceedingly rare, and that the owners of those which do exist are well known. The imitation emerald was invariably perfect, and pawnbrokers were warned to beware of flawless stones which had not a genuine history. But the record mosking swindle has yet to be mentioned. Some two and a half years ago a clever French chemist discovered a process of melting down small rubies and fusing them into one large stone. The result was undoubtedly a ruby. It had all the chemical, physical, and mineralogical characteristics of the precious stone, from which it could hardly be distinguished. The colour was perfect, and the stones were set in genuine gold ornaments. All the manufactured rubies were of large size, and pawnbrokers cheerfully advanced £20 a carat on the gems. Enormous numbers were placed on the market, and found a ready sale. Then one unfortunate day the secret leaked out, and the public refused to look at the rubies, which had been fused in an electric furnace. The value went down from £20 a carat to less than £5, and ruin stared several pawnbrokers in the face. One firm of pawnbrokers and jewellers alone lost £10,000 in a few days. The moskers were never captured, and it is very improbable if they could have been successfully prosecuted if they had been caught, since the articles were really rubies.

What's the Latest News?

IN the eighteenth century such was the craving of the Highlanders for news of Bonnie Prince Charlie, or of anything relating to the struggle which Scotland was then having with England, that on one occasion a notorious criminal was brought out for execution, and the scaffold being erected on a small hill just outside the town, the doomed man was able to discern the approach of a man on horseback. He thereupon most earnestly begged the Sheriff to allow him a few minutes longer, in order that he might speak to the approaching messenger. The Sheriff complied with his request, and when the horseman arrived the criminal said to him, "What is the latest news from England, my friend?"

THE MURDER OF CHARLES LANGAN BY WILLIAM BAKER.

THE LONDON ROAD MURDER

"What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight!"
—SHAKESPEARE, "Henry IV." Part I., Sc. 4.

PART II.

THE cause of the intense interest shown in the case was the fact of the accused being the son of a man respected and honoured throughout Liverpool for his uprightness, his honesty, and his integrity. By perseverance, diligence, keen business acumen, and honourable dealing, he had risen from poverty to wealth. He had prospered in business, and, at the time of which I am writing, was the proprietor of several high-class shell-fish establishments, where the commercial men of the city gathered to discuss the delicious oyster or the toothsome crab, washed down with "Guinness," and accompanied by sweet brown bread and fresh country butter. In business and in private circles, Baker, senior, was liked and looked up to, and all Liverpool thrilled with pity for the stricken father whose unworthy son had brought disgrace on his family and bowed his parent's grey hairs in sorrow and humiliation, and who now stood in the same dock where so many notorious murderers have stood and heard their doom pronounced.

On the iron rail of that dock had leaned Gleason Wilson, William Fish, Mrs. Maybrick, and other criminals whose lives and deeds have been or will be duly chronicled in these pages.

At the trial there was nothing gleaned from the witnesses further than what we have told of the commission of the crime. It was proved to the jury that Baker had had the pistol in his possession at least six weeks before this, and that he had spoken of it as a toy which would "fix the Langans," with the whole of whom he was evidently on bad terms.

After the pistol was found on him, he in all probability felt that he could not free himself from the charge of *voting* Langan, either wilfully or accidentally, and he th set up the theory of accident, his second story to the police icer being that he struck Langan with the weapon, and it it accidentally exploded. This was the only defence thabuld be urged, and the leading counsel for the prisoner (Mr.ope, Q.C.) did his best to convince the jury that, at the ost, all Baker intended to do was to strike Langan instl of shooting him. He also pointed out that the revolvwas not of the most perfect construction, and that it would erefore, the more readily explode. On the other hanMr. McConnell, the learned counsel for the prosecution, amow chairman of the Clerkenwell Sessions, had shown it if Baker had only meant to strike Langan he would mosrobably have struck with the butt end of the pistol, and tconsequence would have been that instead of shooting Igan when the pistol exploded, the barrel pointing towa his own body, he in all probability would have fallen actim to the bullet himself. Besides, it had been proved it at the time the shot was fired Langan was at least twards from Baker.

The summing up of the learned judge, whilst itas a thoroughly calm and impartial analysis of the evidence, was throughout fatal to the accused, and Baker must have by this time realised the great error he had made—even had the theory of accident been a true one—in at first denying that he had firearms in his possession. Possibly had he at once admitted having a revolver, and started the accident theory at the outset, the jury might have taken a more lenient view of his case. We only say, possibly, because the fact that Baker carried this weapon about him, and that he had previously said that it would "fix the Langans," would have gone a long way to prove deliberation and malice aforethought. The question his lordship asked the jury to consider most gravely was whether the allegation of accidental explosion was an honest defence or a mere afterthought. They thought it was the latter, and accordingly Baker was convicted of the capital charge, the jury coupling with the verdict a strong recommendation to mercy.

They were absent from court about an hour and a half. When asked by the Clerk of the Crown why the court should not proceed to pass sentence of death upon him, Baker replied, "I have very little to say. I think if my counsel had taken a different course, a verdict would have been awarded

"Now to business."

otherwise. I am not blaming my counsel, but I think, my own self, he took a wrong course in my defence, and hence the verdict which the jury has awarded. Had the minds of the jury been reached with reference to this man and his threats towards me latterly, I think also that it might have extenuated my case. I have been in fear, and have been a martyr since I have been under my father through their threats; and it appears now from the judgment that has been passed upon me I am still a martyr."

His Lordship then proceeded to pass sentence. He said: "William Baker, you have been found guilty by the jury of the crime of wilful murder. I have listened to what you have just now addressed to them, and I must say that in my opinion you do your counsel very great injustice, for he has urged on your behalf everything which could be fairly said in your favour upon the evidence, and the evidence was such that I should have been astonished if the jury had come to any other conclusion. You adopted the practice of carrying about with you loaded firearms, a practice of the most dangerous description and of the very worst tendency, and one which is wholly unnecessary in this country, where the law is quite sufficient to protect all quiet and peaceable citizens. The result in your case has been most deplorable, because, armed in this way, and with the feeling you have just ex-

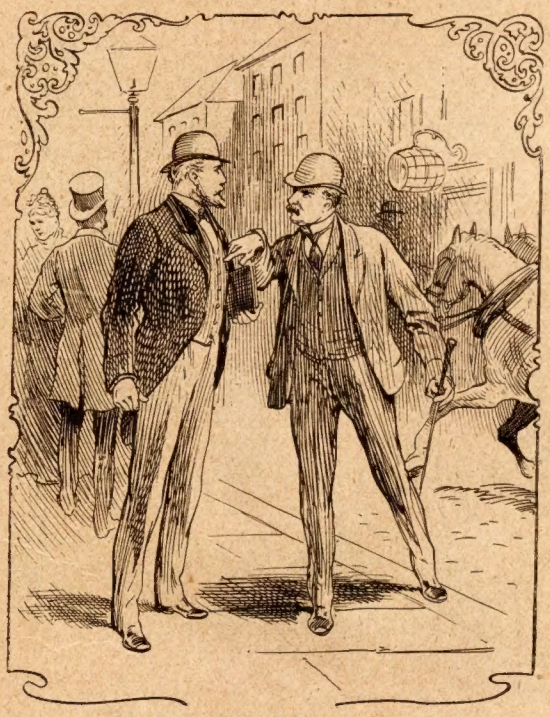
pressed that there was animosity between you and the unfortunate deceased man and his family, upon the very slightest provocation——"

The prisoner: "Upon his side only, my lord, animosity."

His Lordship: "Upon the very slightest provocation, if any, in the most reckless and wanton manner, you drew a pistol and shot him dead on the spot. You hurried him out of this life without preparation and without time. But the law is more merciful to you than you have been to him. During the short time that remains to you let me entreat and implore you to seek forgiveness for the awful crime you have committed. The jury have accompanied the verdict with a recommendation to mercy. That recommendation I will forward to the proper quarter, but I entreat you not to rely upon it, but to prepare for the fate that is before you."

His Lordship then, in the usual form, passed the capital sentence, concluding, amid breathless silence, with the solemn words, "May the Lord have mercy on your soul."

On what grounds the recommendation to mercy was based it is difficult to conceive, as there was not a solitary circumstance which could be urged in palliation of the crime of which Baker had been convicted. It would seem,



"So I've given you a hint. Ta, ta!"

however, that Baker must have had "a friend in court," at all events on the jury, as one of the twelve at first resolutely refused to find a verdict of wilful murder, and it was only when the eleven consented to attach to their verdict a strong recommendation to mercy that he gave way.

Baker's demeanour in court on the day of trial was neither that of defiance nor indifference, but rather that of a man who was the unhappy victim of circumstances, and to this feeling, to the surprise of all who heard him, he gave public expression, as already told. The strange infatuation that in being convicted of Langan's murder he was being made a martyr to the Langan family, held possession of him nearly until the very last, and it found expression again in a petition signed in his own name and forwarded to the Home Secretary, and which was signed by all the jurymen, with the exception of the foreman, a number of clergymen, several members of the Town Council, and others, many of whom were probably influenced to put their names to the petition by the respectability of the family of which Baker was a member.

In that petition, which was forwarded to the Home Secretary by Mr. Blackhurst, Baker's solicitor, Baker stated that about four years previous he had given up betting and as far as possible abandoned all connection with his racing acquaintances, of whom the deceased man, Charles Langan, was one. He became the manager of his father's public-house in Basnett Street, having got married. Shortly after this Langan and his brother were refused drink in the house on account of their character, and ever afterwards both continually annoyed and threatened the petitioner. Even on one occasion, the petitioner represented, Langan waylaid him with a deadly weapon, and his only relief from apprehension of danger was when the latter was imprisoned for a garotte robbery. But upon liberation his threats became more virulent, and the petitioner purchased a revolver, with the object of intimidating the deceased, but without any design of ever using it. The deceased, however, seemed to increase in animosity and vindictiveness, using more violent and threatening language than before. The petitioner dreaded to go out alone at night, communicated his apprehensions to the police, and always sought to have someone with him when out late, and on the very night in question begged some persons whom he casually met to accompany him on his way home, as he was under apprehension of danger to his life from the deceased and his friends. This petition having been published, it is not unlikely that the Langan family should seek to contradict it, and the brothers of the deceased gave a flat denial to all the statements contained in it affecting their character and that of their murdered brother.

Another petition, signed by nine of the jurymen, was forwarded by Baker's brother and brother-in-law, praying for a commutation of the sentence, but it had no effect.

On Saturday, September 4, 1876, the governor of Kirkdale Gaol received an intimation that the law must take its course. Baker's health had given way very much since his conviction, and he appeared about twenty years older than when he was taken into custody. On the night before the execution he was very restless. Before he went to bed he wrote a very affectionate letter to his wife, which was duly forwarded to her. When he got up in the morning he was in a state of collapse, and had to be supplied with some brandy. He was apparently very penitent, but whenever the subject of his crime was mentioned he persistently refused to acknowledge that he ever intended to kill Langan, and he continued to do so until the end.

During his last private interview with his spiritual adviser he gave vent to an uncontrollable outburst of religious emotion, in the course of which he, with great earnestness, asked from the Almighty forgiveness for all his sins. After this he was taken to the reception-room, which was situated close to the scaffold, where he found another man named Cooper, who was also to die that day. Marwood, the executioner, then pinioned both men, and whilst this process was going on Baker suggested to his unhappy comrade that they should exchange blessings.

This Cooper readily consented to do, and each said to the other, "God bless you." This scene was very affecting and touching, and it was perhaps the more so when it was considered that each man was of a different religion, and that although each had different spiritual guides to console, cheer, and pray for them, they were both hopeful of meeting again shortly under far different circumstances.

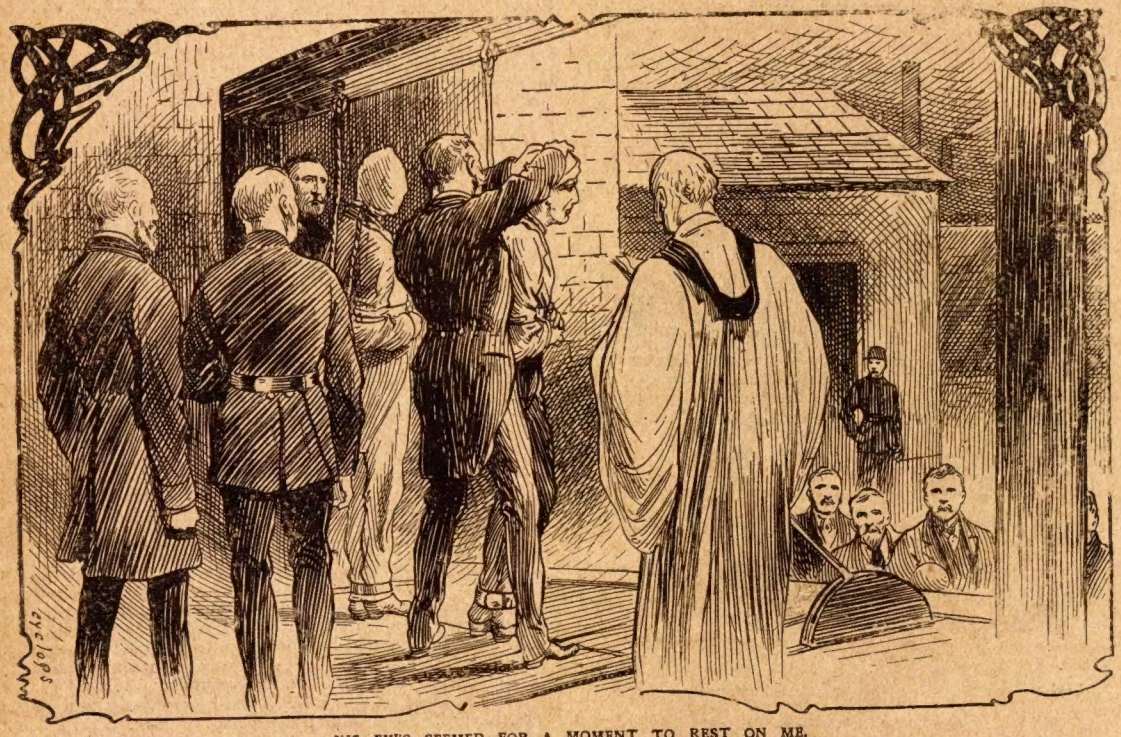
The scaffold was erected at the north-west angle of the prison yard. At a quarter to eight o'clock the prison bell began to toll out its mournful sounds. On previous occasions the condemned had been brought from the pinioning-room promptly at eight o'clock, but on this particular morning there was a delay of about two minutes, which was caused by Baker having broken down entirely on account of weakness. The seconds passed on, it seemed to us, slowly, and wonder was expressed that no sign was made from the pinioning-room. The clock in the chapel steeple showed that it was two minutes past eight, and everybody believed that, after all, a reprieve might have been received for one or other of the two men, when the Chief Warder emerged from the pinioning-room, heralding the approach of the melanchody procession. Following him came Cooper and the Roman Catholic chaplain, and whilst ascending the steps leading to the scaffold, he responded to the prayers of the Rev. Father Bonté, and by the time he reached the fatal platform another warder appeared, followed by Baker and the Church of England chaplain. Baker was dreadfully weak, and seemed scarcely able to walk. Mr. Pigott, the chaplain, assisted him up the stairs, and behind him was a warder, who was followed by Marwood.

The ropes had been prepared previously, and it was noticed that one was much thicker than the other, the one that was intended for Cooper, who was a heavy man, being the stouter. Baker was a slimly-built man, and Marwood appeared to think that a thinner rope would suffice for him.

Including the noose, both ropes were six feet three inches long, leaving a drop of over five feet, which was about double that under the veteran hangman, Calcraft.

Whilst Baker's legs were being pinioned he appeared very weak; so much so, in fact, that a warder had to support him from behind. He repeated the prayers after the chaplain, but his voice was so feeble that it was not heard except by those standing close to him. At one time his head fell back, and a fainting fit appeared imminent; but he recovered sufficiently to enable him to bear up until the terrible vengeance of the law had taken its due course.

A good deal of delay occurred in pinioning the legs of the two men and in adjusting the ropes round their necks, and whilst this was being done Cooper called out in a loud voice: "Gentlemen, good-bye, all! Lord have mercy upon me!" and "Good-bye, Father Bonté!" After the cap had been put over Cooper's face Marwood proceeded to put one over Baker's, and the latter was then heard to say in a distinct voice: "Lord, have mercy on my soul." His head was bent forward, apparently from weakness, and Marwood had some difficulty in adjusting the cap. The doomed man endeavoured to raise his head in order to facilitate its arrangement, and as he did so his eyes seemed for a moment to rest upon me. To this day, even as I pen these lines, I feel welling up in my heart the pity I felt for him and the forgiveness I extended to him for his treatment of me a couple of months before; and then his eyes were blinded for ever by the ghastly apparel of death.



HIS EYES SEEMED FOR A MOMENT TO REST ON ME.

The nooses having been made right, the warders stepped back while Marwood went to the lever having command of the floor of the scaffold. Meanwhile, both men prayed with great fervour, and whilst the prayers were yet lingering on their lips the bolt was drawn, and the two unfortunate men were at once launched into eternity, death being instantaneous. Neither man moved a muscle, nor was a tremor visible in their limbs after the drop fell.

On leaving the prison, I hurried to my cab, which had been waiting for me in Orrel Road—then quite recently built—and was met by the cabman with the remark: "Well, sir, I've seen something this morning that I never believed I would see, and that I never hope to see again as long as there's breath in my blessed body." "What was that, cabby?" said I. "Why, sir, I saw men and women nearly a-fightin' to get close to the prison wall so as they could put their ears agin the bricks to try and hear the noise of the drop. I hope I'll never see sich a thing again. Would you believe it, sir?" he went on, "I never was inside a church since the day I was married, eight years ago, but I went last night to give thanks to the Almighty for ridding us of such a blackguard. He was a dead wrong 'un, I give you my word, sir. Nobody knew him better than me." And here he entered into details of the dead man's career, recounting particulars of some of the most flagrant of his misdeeds, which I have neither space nor inclination to give to my readers; and so I will let the past bury its dead, and go on to something more nearly connected with my story.

I tell now, for the first time, the full details of what will perhaps be looked upon as something that has never been thought of either before or since. A couple of days after the trial of Baker—I think it was on the Monday afternoon—I went into the Bee, and found the smoke-room deserted, save by one person. This was an individual who sat in one corner industriously sucking at a very long and thin cigar. He had all the peculiarities of the typical American—a goatee, a slouch hat, a turn-down collar, and small black bow; a diamond glistened in his broad and immaculate expanse of white shirt-front, and his cigar was held in one corner of his mouth, chewed incessantly, and tilted towards the ceiling. I sat only a few feet from him, and, perhaps, unconsciously looked more intently at him than politeness demanded. He nodded to me, and said: "Is this a fair sample of your tarnation British weather?" And, indeed, it was a wretched day. I can remember now, after the lapse of all these years, what a dank, dreary, dismal day it was, and I can still hear the ceaseless drip, drip drip of the rain, and feel the humid atmosphere. I replied: "It is a wretched day, sir, but hardly a fair sample of our weather." And we thereupon got into conversation over our drinks.

We had not been talking more than five minutes when in walked Mr. Charley Reynolds, the proprietor of the well-known waxworks in Lime Street, and within fifty yards of the south end of St. George's Hall. I remarked to my new acquaintance (whose name, I may say here, was Mr. John Wales): "That's one of the cleverest men in the world at his particular line of business." "Is that so?" replied Wales. "And what mought his business be?" "He is a modeller in wax, and I've seen a specimen of his work during the last few days that staggered me by its perfection." "What was that?" asked my companion. "It was a life-size model of the man Baker, who was condemned to death

last Friday. I know Reynolds well, and, being a Pressman, was invited, with others, to a private view of his latest work. He owns the waxworks just up the street," said I, "and has all the celebrities there; but he is not going to exhibit Baker's model until after the execution.

"I knew Baker well, and I can tell you it gave me a shock when I saw it, so life-like was it. The face, the pose, the position of the hands, the peculiar hang of the head—a little sideways—which Baker had, all were there, and when I saw the figure and had time to notice the little details, I was struck by the wonderful work, and I could almost have imagined that I was looking at Baker himself." "Was it so perfect as that?" said Wales. "It was, indeed," I replied. And then our conversation suddenly flagged, for my companion appeared to be thinking deeply of some matter, and I did not care to disturb his meditations.

Suddenly he looked up. "Say," he ejaculated, "I've got an idea which I'd like to turn over in my mind. Meet me here to-morrow at twelve o'clock, and I'll tell you all about it"; and with that the American hurried out of the room. According to appointment, I was in the Bee on the following day, and my friend entered, with his long, thin cigar between his teeth. He came up to me, shook hands, and said: "Let's go somewhere where it's quiet. I want to talk privately." So I took him to a place in Lime Street, where I knew we would be free from interruption, a "day house," like the Rainbow was. We sat down, called for drinks, and then Wales said to me: "Now to business. I cottoned to you when I had been talking to you awhile yesterday, and I think I can trust you. I suppose you have heard that Baker's father is willing to give £20,000 if his son can be saved from the gallows?" "Yes," I said. "I know he has expressed his willingness to spend that sum in getting his son a reprieve." "Well, now, here's one hundred pounds," said Wales. "Go to Mr. Reynolds, tell him you want that figure of Baker that you told me about yesterday for twenty-four hours—for photographic purposes, or anything else you think he'll believe. Give him the £100, for the loan of the model, with no questions asked, and then bring it to me." He thereupon handed to me ten £10 notes, and proceeded to unfold his plan, which was, briefly, to bribe certain officials, spending, say, £10,000, in doing so, to substitute the waxen effigy for the living culprit on his way to the scaffold, and whilst the counterfeit was being "executed" Baker himself would be handed over to his father in exchange for the £20,000, which he had declared his willingness to give, not for the return of his son, but only for his respite. Wales said he would go to Horncastle, in Lincolnshire, to see Marwood; he would also approach the prison warders and others, and by the time everything was arranged, I would have the figure ready. "But," said I, "what is the use of spending £100 in buying the figure before we know whether you can get at the officials? You'd better take the money back and give it me when you've completed your part of the job." But he wouldn't accept it, and told me to keep it in readiness to make the deal with Reynolds as soon as he gave me the office. Day after day passed, and on each of them, at twelve noon, I met Wales at the Bee to hear what progress he had made. He had been to Lincolnshire, he had haunted Kirkdale Prison morning, noon, and night, but his daily report was: "Nothing done yet." Later Wales informed me that he had got Marwood "all right," and also three of the Kirkdale warders. The difficulty was with some of the higher officials, the chief warder, for instance; but still, he was in hopes of something turning up in the course of the next few days.

I have hinted that my profession is that of an artist, and in my early days I was articled to an architect, where I acquired a great facility in plan-drawing, which enabled me from my knowledge of Kirkdale Gaol to give Wales a ground-plan of the place of execution, together with the surrounding buildings; and by the aid of this he had worked out a means of substituting the wax model for Baker himself when the latter was on his way to the scaffold. His suggestion was that Baker should feign an almost utter prostration when leaving the pinioning-room. On reaching the scaffold, he would apparently collapse completely, and the warders would be compelled to support him. Hidden from sight by a partition of wood, which was part of the scaffold's appendages, the wax figure would be leaned, waiting the moment when it was wanted. Coming from the steps to the drop, Baker would be out of sight of those present for about two seconds, and this was the opportunity. Pulling himself together, he would have to slip quickly behind the partition mentioned, whilst Marwood pushed the wax figure into the arms of waiting and willing warders, Baker slipping into the niche lately vacated by the "dummy," and which was within a yard of the actual drop. Nothing now remained but the bribing and co-operation of the necessary officials.

Four days before the execution I met Detective Jim Collingwood, quite by accident, in Islington. He called me to one side, and said, "Who's that Yankee that you've been seen about with so much lately? You're an old pal of mine, Harold, so I've given you a hint. Ta, ta!" And he jumped on a passing 'bus without waiting for my reply.

On Saturday, September 5, I met Wales, as usual, at the Bee. Baker was to be hanged on the following Monday. As soon as the American saw me he hurried to me, and said, "It's all off, my young friend. If we got at the warders we can't get past the governor." "What about these notes, then," I asked, "if it's all off? You'd better have them back, as you won't want me to buy that model now." Wales replied, as he grasped my hand and shook it: "Keep them, sonny; I may want you again"—and quickly walked out of the place. Thus we parted, and I have never set eyes on him since.

If Detective Collingwood is still in the land of the living—and I hope he is—he will now be at liberty to tell me whether he knew of our scheme when he gave me the hint by asking who the Yankee was, or if his shot was a random one.

"A Soft Answer," etc.

ROBERT BARCLAY, the eminent Quaker, was once stopped when on his travels by a highwayman, who levelled his pistol with the usual demand, "Your money or your life!" The Quaker preserved his calm self-possession, looked straight into the robber's face, and said, "Friend, I am no man's enemy, but the friend of all men, and therefore will I willingly relieve thy wants, if thou wilt tell me what thou seekest and what thou art most in need of. I fear not death, having a Divine hope of immortality. Canst thou, then, friend, have the heart to shed the blood of one who has no other feeling or desire than to do thee good?" The highwayman was so taken aback at this most unique form of "passive resistance" that without further parley he put spurs to his horse and fled.

The Anatomist Was at Fault.

A NOTED highwayman, named Gordon, was sentenced to death in the year 1733 for the brutal murder of the Under-Treasurer of the Temple at Knightsbridge. It came to the knowledge of his grace the Duke of Montague, whose hobby was anatomical and surgical experiments, that a certain French anatomist, M. Chovet, could so open the windpipe as to effectually prevent any fatal consequences from hanging, and he managed to obtain a pardon for the condemned man on condition of his trying the experiment on himself. The anatomist and a Dr. Beavis had several interviews with Gordon, and fully explained the process to him; but they had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to take the first step—viz., to cut his own windpipe. Finally, he was prevailed upon to make a small incision, which M. Chovet quickly made larger. The effect was tried, Gordon stopping his mouth, nostrils, and ears for some minutes, and receiving sufficient air through the incision as to continue life. He was then hanged by the neck for fifteen minutes, but though he received sufficient air by means of the incision to play the lungs, the veins were stopped through the pressure, and the man died. The duke thereupon told the anatomist that he had only learned half his profession; he certainly did know how to let air into a man's lungs, but he just as certainly did not know how to get the veins to work and do their part in the human machine.

The Killer—Not the Killed.

MR. ANSTER, the translator of "Faust," was once engaged, when practising at the Irish bar, to defend a young man who was charged with an agrarian murder. The accused bore a remarkably good character, was the last person in the world one would believe guilty of the crime of murder, and the evidence against him was purely circumstantial. Anster felt very sorry for the young fellow, defended him in most able fashion, and secured his acquittal. The poor man overwhelmed his counsel with gratitude, and left the court with tears in his eyes.

Some years after, when Mr. Anster was in his chambers in Dublin late one night, busily engaged in looking over a brief he had that day received, he heard a knock at the door, and went to see who it was. When the visitor came fully into the light, Anster, after a few seconds' thought, recognised his former client, though he forgot his name. He, however, remembered one name that was prominent in the case, and, though it was that of the murdered man, he thought it was his visitor's. He thereupon exclaimed, "What, Kelly!" "No, your honour, not Kelly, but the boy that shot him." Poor Anster almost fainted at the quaint reply.

How a Gang of Accomplished Swindlers Defrauded a French Countess of Enormous Sums, Hoodwinked the British Public, and were aided in their Nefarious Schemes by Detectives of Scotland Yard.

"The fraud of men was ever so."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Much Ado About Nothing," Act II., Scene 3 (Song).

PART II.

ON October 24, 1877, an absorbing sequel to the Great Turf Frauds was opened at the Old Bailey. The cleverness, audacity, and magnitude of the operations conducted by Kurr, Benson, and the others had captured the imagination of the public. The revelations made by the convicts after sentence, when made public by the arrest of trusted officers of Scotland Yard, formed a topic of most engrossing interest in all ranks of society.

In July sufficient evidence had been received to justify the arrest of three detective inspectors (Meiklejohn, Druscovitch, and Palmer), and subsequently a fourth, even higher in position, viz., Chief Inspector Clarke, became involved in the charge.

The position was unique in our history. Officers of justice, like other men, are fallible, and occasionally, though to the honour of the force be it said rarely, make themselves amenable to the criminal law in one way or another. But here, if the accusations of the convicts were to be relied on, the most trusted agents of the chief organisation in the country for the repression and detection of crime had been prostituting their talents and abusing their powers to thwart the ends of that justice of which they were the guardians.

Surprise, indignation, alarm, reigned everywhere. Scotland Yard, the trusty shield and buckler of life and property, honeycombed with corruption! The thing at first sight seemed impossible. It was the cunning plot of defeated swindlers to destroy the zealous and vigilant officers to whom their capture was due. But a little reflection disposed of that thesis. Then, naturally, the pendulum swung freely to the other end of the arc. Apprehension began to be felt and expressed that the whole personnel of Scotland Yard was corrupt, and that only such criminals were brought to justice as were too poor, or too little versed in the ways of the Yard, to secure immunity by bribery.

Happily, all such apprehensions were practically allayed by the result of the trial. To us, now, the quasi-panic that prevailed in respectable society seems almost incredible. But its actual existence must be borne in mind if one would truly gauge the absorbing interest with which the trial was followed during the score of days over which it spread.

On the morning of October 24 the Central Criminal Court was packed, and its doors thronged long before the sitting began.

The presiding judge was the late Baron Pollock.

The accused brought up for trial were John Meiklejohn, Nathaniel Druscovitch, Wm. Palmer, George Clarke, detective police officers, and Edward Froggatt, solicitor, who were indicted for unlawfully conspiring together to commit divers offences and frauds and to prevent discovery of such offences and frauds.

All declined to plead, and a plea of not guilty was entered by the judge's order.

The Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General, with whom were Mr. (now Sir) John Gorst, Q.C., Mr. Bowen,

INSPECTOR CLARKE SUSPECTS BENSON OF BEING A SCOUNDREL.

and Mr. Cowie, instructed by the Solicitor to the Treasury, represented the Crown; Mr. Montagu Williams and Mr. Walter Ballantine appeared as counsel for Meiklejohn; Mr. (now Sir) Douglas Straight for Druscovitch; Mr. Besley and Mr. Grain for Palmer; Mr. Collins, Q.C., Mr. Kisch, and

He had not the strength of will or mind to throw the bribe from him.

Mr. Avory for Froggatt; and Mr. (now Sir) Edward Clarke and Mr. Charles Mathews for Clarke. The counsel for Clarke were retained on his behalf by the Treasury; the remainder of the accused bore the cost of their own defence.

The accused were all men of a distinct individuality, partly native, partly acquired in the arduous pursuit of their several branches of work; and in each case their appearance and demeanour on that long trial was no bad index of the real men.

Meiklejohn, of powerful build and great physical vigour, with stern, prominent features, square jaw, and keen, sharp eyes, sunk deep under the over-arching eyebrows, betrayed to the least astute beholder the possession of that force of character and resolution which, for good or evil, gave him so great weight with his fellows, and made him, when in pursuit of his duty, one of the most dreaded enemies of the criminal classes in this country.

Druscovitch, the Slav, with all the physical and mental litheness of his race, and all its linguistic ability; small, dark, and nervous, was a complete contrast to his neighbour, but in his way as effective an instrument for good or evil, and so as valuable an ally to Kurr and Benson. With him lay the control of much of the foreign work of the Yard, owing to his acquaintance with Continental countries and languages —and so, through him, the earliest notice of any complaints from the French police relative to swindling operations in that country could be obtained.

Palmer, a good-looking, well-set-up man, of the semi-military type so frequently seen in the force, was the least strongly-marked individuality. Chief-Inspector Clarke, old, with a faint resemblance to the Duke of Wellington, thoughtful-looking, with thirty-seven years' service behind him, gave one the impression that years and varied experience had taught him at least the wisdom of caution, as nature and early training had endowed him with a large sense of duty. Froggatt, slight occipitally, keen-eyed, sharp at catching points, and deft in using them, looked, as he was, a lawyer in fair criminal practice.

The story of how the agents of the law, one after another, became the allies and supporters of its enemies, as brought out at the trial, is a curious one.

In 1872, there was an accidental encounter between William Kurr and Meiklejohn in a public-house in Islington, when, according to Kurr's testimony, Meiklejohn pretended that he was up from Scotland in pursuit of certain malefactors. Kurr also, though living in his native Islington, professed to be carrying on a betting agency in Scotland, and was complimented by Meiklejohn upon his astuteness in making the discovery that the Betting Act did not apply to that country.

Kurr eventually did establish a spurious betting agency, both in Edinburgh and London, under the name of Philip Gardner and Co., but the London agency was rooted out by Druscovitch after a very brief existence. The Edinburgh branch lasted for several months, but that city soon became too hot for comfort, and Kurr made a trip to America. For services in warning and otherwise aiding Kurr and his confederates in respect of proceedings taken against them in connection with this agency, Meiklejohn, with whom Kurr had by this time established some kind of understanding, received £100 in one sum, and probably a smaller sum or sums in addition.

That appears to have been the fount and origin of the subsequent rather extended connection of Kurr with Scotland Yard officials. Kurr testifies that on June 17, 1874, he gave Meiklejohn £200 for warning him when information was received in Scotland Yard relating to the spurious betting agency established by him in Glasgow, under the name of the Discretionary Investment Society, a singularly attractive designation, which, however its title might apply to the methods of the projectors, did not convey that the investors were overburdened with discretion.

In the end of 1874 the firm of Archer and Co. was started in Adam Street, under the high-sounding title of the Sys-

"Arrest me if you like!" said Kurr.

tematic Investment Society. Out of that a lot of money was made, most of which was drawn from the Continent, Benson having by this time joined Kurr as linguist and fellow-conspirator. Complaints from the Continent coming into Scotland Yard, fell into the charge of Inspector Druscovitch, as yet untouched by the machinations of the swindlers, and he put an end to the fraud as it existed in London; but it appears to have lasted rather longer in Scotland.

The Solicitor-General.

It was in respect of this firm of Archer and Co. that Meiklejohn, in November, 1874, wrote the following two letters to Kurr. One, dated November 15, ran thus:

"DEAR BILL.—I should like to see you to-morrow at my place before 9 p.m. I have a letter from Glasgow. I now go on duty from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Wire a line if I may expect you."

That letter showed close friendly relations existing between this Scotland Yard inspector and a man known to him to be a swindler. But if further proof were needed, it is to be found in the next letter, written two days later, on November 17:

DEAR BILL,—Rather important news from the North. Tell H. S. and the young one to keep themselves quiet. In the event of a smell stronger than now, they must be ready to scamper out of the way. I should like to see you as early as possible. Bring this note with you. In any case the 'brief' is out. If not, it will be; so you must keep a sharp look out."

A "brief," it may be explained, was interpreted at the trial as a warrant, and the interpretation being accepted, the proof is incontrovertible of this public servant warning a malefactor of the issue of a warrant against him.

For this and other services in connection with the Archer and Co. swindle Meiklejohn again received a large sum of money. Let Kurr relate the transaction.

The Attorney-General.

At a meeting of the conspirators there was a discussion as to the amount to be paid to Meiklejohn for his services, when, says Kurr: "I handed over £300, saying, 'Here's £300, Jack.' He says, 'What do you mean? The amount was to be £500.' As we had made perhaps £8,000 amongst us by the Archer and Co. speculation, there was no difficulty made about that."

With the money thus received, Meiklejohn bought his house in South Lambeth Road. The very notes were traced from the bank of issue, through Kurr and Meiklejohn to the solicitor for the vendor of the house.

So far there is no proof, and only a tainted suggestion that any other officer of Scotland Yard had illicit cognisance of or complicity in these frauds. But observe how the web is spun henceforth for the actual or attempted entanglement of fresh official allies.

In 1874 Chief-Inspector Clarke, then engaged in investigating a burglary in Essex, called in the course of his inquiries at a public-house in Red Lion Street, kept by a Mr. Walters, and later wrote him a letter, which, under certain circumstances, might be capable of misconstruction. Walters and the man Murray afterwards tried with Kurr and Benson, were arrested in connection with one of these frauds, and being admitted to bail, absconded.

Clarke's letter had come into possession of Kurr, and it occurred to the arch-schemer that it might be made the means of opening communications with the Chief-Inspector, and so gradually enmeshing him in their net. Clarke's known probity and general high character made the task one of great delicacy. So it was entrusted to Benson, the suave and gentlemanlike member of the band, the facile linguist, the accomplished musician, the man, in fact, of universal accomplishments, who, on the proceeds of the Archer and Co. swindle, had retired to the Isle of Wight, where he kept an elegant establishment, and mixed in the best society of the Island under the name of Yonge.

Through a Mr. Andrews, a professional gentleman of good standing, Mr. Yonge made known to Inspector Clarke that he could give some information about the "wanted" men, Walters and Murray. Clarke, after consultation with his superiors, visited the Isle of Wight, and saw Mr. Yonge, of whose identity with Benson he had no conception. But his instincts and old professional habit served him well, for on his return he reported not only that he had derived no useful information from Mr. Yonge, but that he believed the man to be a scoundrel. However, a correspondence was arranged between them under an arrangement that the letters on each side should be returned, the bait held out to the Senior Chief-Inspector at the "Yard" being the recovery of the letter he had written to Walters before he became aware that Walters was engaged in criminal pursuits.

Baron Pollock.

A second visit was paid by Clarke to the Isle of Wight on June 22, 1875, and on that occasion Benson asserts that he arrived at an understanding with him, and gave him £50 in gold, part of the proceeds of a note changed by a Mr. Cooper. But as the changing of the note was subsequently disproved, no reliance was at the trial placed either on the statement or on a letter written by Benson to Clarke two days later, requesting a meeting in London that he might "pay the remainder of his debt to Mrs. Clarke, £50."

No further overt movement of consequence appears to have taken place until the beginning of 1876. The gang operating, as they did, largely on the Continent, were exceedingly desirous of getting Druscovitch into their clutches. But no means offered, nor, apparently, did any of them dare to approach the little Slav with open bribes. Unluckily for himself, Inspector Druscovitch had backed a bill of his brother's which he had to meet, and, the salaries of detective inspectors not being conceived on a very liberal scale, he was for the moment pinched for money.

Addressing himself to his colleague, Meiklejohn, he inquired whether he could lend him £60. Meiklejohn was concerned that he could not, but he thought he knew a man who could and would, "a sporting man, with loads of money."

That was the beginning of the end with Druscovitch. He was introduced to this benevolent sporting man, who lent him the £60 without demur, without even exacting an acknowledgment or appointing a date for the return of the loan. Druscovitch averred at the trial, and there is no good reason

for doubting his word, that he then knew nothing of Kurr's fraudulent transactions, but believed him to be as represented, a "sporting" or "betting" man, free with his money, as many of these gentry are when "the ball rolls their way."

But it is an easy slide down Avernus, and the foothold near the verge of the summit is insecure. In August, 1876, Kurr and Benson had devised the machinery, afterwards put into play in the execution of the great Montgomery or De Goncourt frauds. It was necessary for the temporary success of that plot that the gang should have some friends in the Post Office who could keep them apprised of any action taken by the authorities to stop letters addressed to any of the offices they intended to open. That was done through Meiklejohn, as the convicts allege in evidence, though the charge was not fully borne out. So far all was well. But it now became imperative that their hold upon Druscovitch should be made secure, for upon him would devolve the duty of attending to any complaints forwarded by the Paris police, and of acting upon any information obtained from them.

Here again Meiklejohn, who had already been put in possession of the scheme, at a dinner given at Benson's lodgings, came to the rescue. As was proved by a letter in his handwriting produced at the trial, he contrived an appointment at the Swan Hotel, Clapham Road, and there Meiklejohn, Kurr, and Druscovitch met. Druscovitch was then given to understand something, if not all, of the projected scheme of operations, and seems, though not eagerly, to have given at least tacit assent to it. Twenty-five pounds offered to him by Kurr he declined, but when it was put in his pocket he had not strength of mind or will to throw it from him. So he also stood fully committed to the rogues.

In the same month of August, Kurr declares he went to Clarke's house in Great College Street, Westminster, by appointment, and there explained to him the De Goncourt scheme generally, arranged for a correspondence, and gave him £50. The form of the correspondence was this. Clarke, unwilling, as Kurr asserted, to commit himself to writing, arranged that whenever it was desirable that he should see Kurr, he should send him an envelope containing a blank piece of blotting-paper, and, so that the concealment of origin should be complete, Kurr himself supplied the envelopes.

All being thus prepared, offices were taken in Northumberland Street, on August 31, within a hundred yards of the back-door of Scotland Yard. The swindle proved a very lucrative one, and no necessity arose for the intervention of the friends secured at Scotland Yard until September 25, when Kurr, driving home from his office in his well-appointed trap, as was his custom, saw Druscovitch, who told him a "big job" had just come over from Paris. Kurr, naturally, was desirous of knowing whether it actually referred to the swindle in which he was engaged, but Druscovitch, with some lingering feeling of duty in his mind, and probably feeling sore at the position into which he had allowed himself to be drawn, refused to be more explicit. On his arrival at home, Kurr, according to his own testimony, received an envelope containing a blank sheet of blotting-paper, and, knowing what it meant, went to see Clarke, who put him on his guard.

Next day Kurr again met Druscovitch underneath Charing Cross Station by appointment, and then the unfortunate inspector gave full information, saying finally, as if to wash his hands of all future concern in the matter, "Now I have given you the tip, and you must look after yourselves."

The trepidation of Druscovitch and his evident disinclination to yield any further aid to the conspirators made a deep impression on Kurr. So, after making some arrangements for the effacement of evidence against the gang, he hurried off to Derby, where Meiklejohn was now employed by the Midland Railway, and pleaded with him to start at once for London. "If you don't," said he, "Druscovitch will make a mess of it."

The pair took train for London that evening, first sending a telegram to Druscovitch to meet them at St. Pancras, which he did. The interview, in spite of the gravity of the situation for the interesting trio concerned, had its humorous sides.

Druscovitch, himself no mean French scholar, had by this time seen some of the letters written in that language by Benson to Madame De Goncourt, and could not restrain his admiration. (It must be remembered that Druscovitch had never met Benson.)

"You have got a clever fellow behind you," he burst out. "Talk about Victor Hugo! I never read such French in my life! As for the countess's brother, when he speaks of them, all he can say is 'Mon Dieu'!"

Next day Meiklejohn, though with some difficulty, obtained the numbers of the bank-notes known to be in possession of the swindlers that had been stopped, and that information was sent on to Benson, then in Scotland changing the notes.

Warrants having been issued for the conspirators, Meiklejohn, Kurr, and Druscovitch met at a public-house near Kentish Town Station, where the situation was again discussed.

Druscovitch, nervous and ill at ease, in wretched physical health also, was on tenter-hooks.

"What am I to do?" he cried. "I must arrest somebody for this job!"

"You can arrest me, if you like," said Kurr, who, be it understood, was up to that time quite confident that his tracks were so well covered that no conviction could be secured against him.

"You have not been seen at any of the places, have you?" inquired Druscovitch.

"Not I," returned Kurr, mistakenly, as it eventually turned out.

Froggatt's appeal for mercy.

"Then," suggested Druscovitch, "be in Fleet Street about one o'clock, and I'll send Clarke, or someone, to 'lift' you."

"No, no," laughed the prospective prisoner "I'm not going to wait about Fleet Street all day. I've got to attend to changing some notes. But," he added, with great complaisance, "you can come to my house at nine o'clock and arrest me there."

That project apparently came to nothing; but before the trio separated Meiklejohn inquired of Kurr what he intended giving Druscovitch for these further services, adding, by way of query, "Five cents?" (meaning £500). The "five cents," however, dwindled to £200 in gold, which was said to have been placed in a cigar-box, and put in care of Meiklejohn for conveyance to Druscovitch.

A day or two later it was known that some of the notes issued to Kurr and Benson had been returned to London from the Clydesdale Bank, Glasgow. Both Clarke and Druscovich knew of this, but sent on the information to Glasgow by letter instead of by telegram, thus allowing the culprits time to escape, and arrive in London. Kurr declares that he then

gave Clarke £150, and arranged with him to send to the Midland station, for the purpose of tracing Benson, an officer whom he could square.

On October 25, Kurr, Benson, and Meiklejohn met at the Castle and Falcon, in Aldersgate Street, and there the last named received £500 in five £100 Clydesdale bank-notes. One of these he changed at Leeds, and one or two in Manchester. On October 30 Kurr gave Druscovitch another £100.

Superintendent Williamson.

But all this was easy for men who were the possessors of many thousands extracted from the pockets of their credulous dupes in the compass of a few weeks.

The scent, however, was now getting hot in the metropolis, notwithstanding all the precautions taken, and Benson in particular was in danger from some indiscretions of his French servant and his late housekeeper. So the whole party removed to Scotland, where Meiklejohn introduced Benson to Mr. Monteith, manager of the Alloa Bank, as Mr. Young, of Melbourne, and Benson there deposited a considerable sum, residing meanwhile in good style at the Bridge of Allan. Kurr, who was there also, received some information that led him to believe they were sought for in Scotland, and so it was resolved to return to London on November 10.

On that day they received a telegram, reading:

"If Shanks is near the Isle of Wight, let him leave at once and see you."

That telegram, and a letter also written by him, telling that the "plates" had been seized, was practically the only proof connecting Palmer with any fraudulent interest in the concerns of the conspirators. It was not even suggested that he had received any pecuniary reward for that or any other service, and, beyond these two facts, only a mere speaking acquaintance was proved with Kurr.

Clarke.

To return to Scotland and the gang. Next day they received a letter addressed to Giffard (the name then borne by Kurr) in his own handwriting, containing a piece of blotting paper, with the inscription in pencil, "Keep the lame man (Benson) out of the way at once."

Kurr, alarmed, set out for Edinburgh, telegraphed to London in Meiklejohn's name, and, finding that Druscovitch was on his way north with a warrant for Benson's arrest, arranged a meeting with him in Edinburgh. Druscovitch, compelled by his instructions to go to Bridge of Allan, did so, but on his arrival made such a perfunctory search that he missed his quarry, who eventually escaped to Holland.

Some little suspicion appears to have been awakened at Scotland Yard at the time by the delay of Druscovich, but for the time all passed over.

Froggatt's part in the conspiracy came later, when Benson and two of his confederates were arrested in Rotterdam. Froggatt getting early intelligence of the arrest, came into communication with Kurr, and the two concocted a telegram, which was sent to the authorities in Rotterdam in the name of Scotland Yard, saying:

Palmer.

"Find Norton (Benson's alias) and the other two men are not those we want. Liberate them. Letter follows."

The ruse nearly succeeded, but not quite.

Subsequently Froggatt passed over to Rotterdam, where he interviewed the captives and soothed their gaoler with a £10 note. Here he received instructions to recover an incriminating French directory, with notes in Benson's handwriting, used in the late frauds, and also an important letter. He was too late to get either when he reached Southborough Road, where they had been left. A detective had been but a little before him.

These actions formed the grounds upon which Froggatt was convicted.

Though, as was said before, some suspicion had been awakened in Scotland Yard that all was not right, the matter would doubtless have passed over without, at any rate, a public esclandre, had it not been for the apprehension of the entire gang engaged in the Turf Frauds. By means of bribery, and such surreptitious methods as are well known to habitual criminals, Benson and Kurr communicated with each other freely when lying awaiting trial, and, even after conviction, managed to confirm each other in their prearranged determination to split, if sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

Their decision, though unfortunate for their detective accomplices, was a boon in disguise to the public. It effectually rooted out in its beginning what might have become a widespreading canker in a great public department, and it so effectually opened the eyes of the authorities to the possibilities of danger surrounding them, that more stringent measures were taken to assure the absolute fidelity to their trust of officers then and thenceforward employed at the "Yard," so far as human ingenuity could devise measures to that end.

Froggatt.

There was practically no evidence of any value given on behalf of the detectives charged, save in the case of Clarke and, in a lesser degree, in that of Palmer.

In Clarke's case it was shown that he lived in a very humble way, that he had for many years been one of the

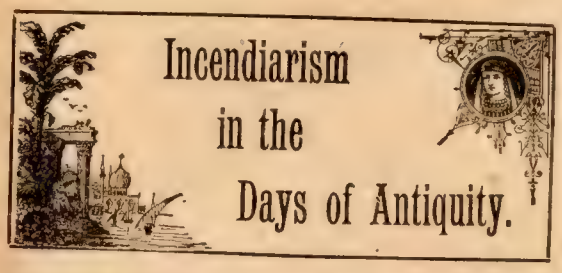
most valued servants of the "Yard" in rooting out just such gangs of swindlers as these, and that none of the residents of his house had ever seen Kurr there, although the latter claimed to have paid numerous visits.

Eloquent speeches were made by the learned counsel on each prisoner's behalf, but without avail, save in the case of Clarke, who was acquitted.

Baron Pollock, in delivering sentence, expressed a sense of the inadequacy of the punishment he could bestow for the offence. He felt it his duty, and his only duty, to sentence Druscovitch, Meiklejohn, and Palmer to be imprisoned and kept at hard labour for two years.

The sentences were received without emotion in the case of the three just mentioned, but when a similar sentence was passed on Froggatt, that unhappy man burst out with an appeal to the judge to reduce it—without effect.

The years that have passed since that day have carried away Clarke, Palmer, and Druscovitch, to their long home. Clarke for some time kept the "Cock," in Kennington Road; Palmer, after his release, kept the "Mitre," now the "Clachan," in Fleet Street; Druscovitch died in prison; Meiklejohn was heard of but recently in court; and Froggatt has disappeared from ken.



Incendiarism in the Days of Antiquity.

ONE of the most frequent charges to be met with in the police documents of antiquity was that of incendiarism. So frequent, in fact, were these cases that we are told no fewer than two hundred and fifteen persons were tried, in Babylon alone, during the short reign of Nabupaluser, the father of Nebuchadnezzar.

The recent excavations carried on at Hillah by the German Universities, of which the reports are just to hand, show that even at a far earlier date this class of crime was by no means uncommon.

On excavating a portion of Hillah known to the Arabs as Kasr el Bint, a large stone coffer was discovered, which, on being broken open, was found to contain a number of inscribed tablets, which on examination turned out to be reports of police cases. Among them were murders, suicides, burglaries, and instances of wilfully setting private property on fire.

This latter class are all dated in the reign of Kuri-galzu, about B.C. 1400. They are, therefore, the oldest documents of the kind that have been discovered.

We select for our purpose the longest of these reports, which may be taken as a fair sample of this class of record. The tablet is of burnt clay, 10½ inches long and 5 inches broad.

It appears that a man named Arad-Ea had been told by his physician that he needed a change of air, and that in order to follow out the doctor's orders he had gone to Erech, leaving his house, which was in the centre of Babylon, in charge of an old woman named Erish-gal, whom he had known for many years. A few days after he had left, a man called at the house, saying that he had been sent to fetch some clothes for the master. This person was allowed to look for the clothes while the old woman was out.

On her return, she discovered that the place was alight from top to bottom, and the man was nowhere to be found. A number of people swore to seeing him leave the building, but they could not say if he had any parcel of clothes with him.

As this tablet is probably unique in its character, we will quote verbatim the first eight lines. After the usual salutation to the judge, the tablet says:

"I, Arad-Ea, a merchant within Babylon, was ill. An evil malady had made my legs to totter. To my physician I went, my physician a good man said weakness of the spine was my complaint and to the country I must go. My house in Babylon with its goods to the hand of the old Erish-gal I trusted. To Erich I went, there news they brought me that my house someone had destroyed and in fire had burned," etc.

It would appear from the reverse side of the tablet (these tablets are always written on both sides) that Arad-Ea had some idea who the culprit was. He says that about two months before the occurrence he had refused the hand of his daughter to a man named Tukulti-Ninip, because he was well known as a bad character throughout the town; it was, therefore, quite possible that this man, having found out that he was from home, had gone to his house under the pretence of fetching clothes and had then set it on fire.

He, Arad-Ea, exonerated the old woman from all blame, because, as he puts it, "her mind was too simple to hatch up such a thing." It is a pity that we are left in the dark as to the final result of this case, but if the culprit was ever caught, the severest punishment would be meted out to him.

The laws of Babylonia respecting damage to property were exceedingly strict, it being quite a common thing to cut off the ears and nose of any person found tampering with other people's goods. In cases, however, of incendiarism, the punishment was intended to fit the crime, for we find that in the criminal laws of Hammurabi, a code drawn up about B.C. 2200, the punishment consisted of burning the prisoner alive in a fire specially prepared on or near the scene of his offence.

In Assyria the punishment was of a different kind, although equally severe. It consisted of cutting off the right hand for the first offence, and being flayed alive for the second.

It is curious to note how severely the Assyrian laws punished this class of crime if committed in their own country, and yet how they themselves always burnt everything they came across when marching on some foreign campaign. It might be argued that this was in war time, but we must remember that they not only burnt the houses of the enemy, for which there might be some excuse, but they laid in ashes the homes of people who had never done them any harm, simply for the mere sake of destruction.

As far as we know, there is no authentic record of cases of this class having come before the courts of Egypt. It is true that occasionally out of revenge some person would break into one of the tombs, and, having removed the mummy, would burn the coffin, but this would come more under the heading of sacrilege than incendiarism.

The only case on record where the mummy itself was destroyed by fire is that of the Queen Ankh-nes Ranefer-ab, the daughter of Nitocris, and wife of Amasis I., whose black marble sarcophagus is now in the British Museum. This fiendish act is attributed to Cambyses, out of revenge for having been deceived by Amasis into marrying a woman who was not the king's daughter, whose hand he had demanded.

A unique case of incendiarism and suicide is that of Shamas-sum-ukin, the foster brother of Assurbanipal, B.C. 650. It appears that Assurbanipal had made his foster brother tributary King of Babylon, but the Chaldeans prevailed upon him to throw off the Assyrian yoke. In the month Elul (August) he collected a vast army, intending to march on Nineveh, but Assurbanipal, having received information of his intentions, marched against him. When Shamas-sum-ukin heard this, he returned to Babylon, and after dressing himself in his royal robes, he himself set fire to his palace and perished in the flames. It is this incident in Oriental history which has been immortalised by Byron in his celebrated poem, "Sardanapalus."

Curran's Adventure.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN always prided himself on his punctuality, especially when invited out to dine. He had received a special invitation one day to a dinner-party, but the patience of the assembled guests was long exhausted, and as there were no signs of his coming, they concluded he must have been drowned, and all the stable-boys were sent out with lanterns to search for his body in the river. After many disappointments a maid at last discovered him stark naked and shivering in a bedroom, where he had gone to take a bath. The Newfoundland dog of the house was lying watching him and ready to spring the moment he moved, as it did not know him when stripped of his usual dress. He had been kept at bay in this situation for some hours, and was afraid to stir lest the avenging guardian should seize him by the throat. At last the master of the house appeared on the scene, and rescued the naked figure from premature destruction, put him to bed under a heavy pile of blankets, and administered brandy and hot water, by which means he was sufficiently brought round to relate the hairbreadth escape.

The 'Madness' of James Naylor,

AND WHY HE KILLED HIS WIFE.

Being an account of the Elsing Tragedy of 1863.

"Mad, quotha? Quite mad?
'Twere charity to think so!"
—WILLIAM WARGRAVE'S "An Erratic Wife."

SCENE, the village of Elsing, in Norfolk. Time, the early autumn of the year 1863. Dramatis personæ, a man and a girl. They were standing by the gate which led to the quaint and quiet, remote and secluded churchyard, and a curious couple they appeared to be, for the man was well over middle age, and the woman could not have been more than eighteen. Yet something in the eager face of the man and in the pale countenance of the girl seemed to signify that the relations between them were not those of father and daughter, uncle and niece, or even mere acquaintances. The meeting was obviously not a casual one, and the subject of their conversation not one of indifference to either. His wild and bloodshot eyes were fixed intently upon her upturned face, and hers were occasionally glancing furtively around, as though seeking some excuse to run away or some chance to escape. His right hand grasped, with no gentle touch, her slender wrist, and he stood with his back firmly fixed against the gate as though to prevent her leaving the spot until he had said all that he could find words—for he was a slow speaker and uneducated—to say. It was a beautiful evening in September, and the western sky was aflame with the crimson glories of the departing sun. The air was mild and balmy, and carried with it the scent of the bright, yellow hay across the fields, and the birds sang a last pæan to the dying day. Peace and calm were everywhere, for nature herself was weary of the long September day, and was preparing herself for slumber. The church clock struck seven, and the girl started and tightened her shawl about her neck with her disengaged hand.

"I must be going, Mr. Naylor," she said. "That was seven went then, and mother will want me to bring the cows in. Let my arm go, please." She spoke with an accent superior to the majority of her class; but Lydia Summers had had a better education than most of the farmers' girls in the district, and had profited not a little by a residence as nursemaid with a well-to-do family in Norwich. The man reluctantly and slowly withdrew his hand from the girl's arm. "You don't think I mean it, Lydia," he said gruffly, "but that's just where you're wrong, my gell. I mean every word of what I've been sayin' to you, and so you'll find before very long. My old woman can't last much longer—she's eighty-one, Lydia, eighty-one—and when she goes I holds you to your promise. You said 'I'll be Mrs. Naylor number two,' and Mrs. Naylor number two I means you to be.' He moved slightly from the gate, but his burly form still barred the way, and the girl again looked anxiously about her. "How foolish you talk," she said at last, with a poor attempt at spirit. "Can't you understand that I was only joking? Why, I'm not nineteen till next March, and everyone knows you're over fifty! I've no wish to be the May to your December, and, what's more, I won't be! Oh!" she added, as the man made a menacing gesture, "there's no one else in the case, if that's what you're thinking of; but I don't marry you, James Naylor, now or at any time, so that's flat!" and with these words she suddenly slipped under the man's outstretched arm, raised the latch of the gate, and ran laughing down the hill, which led to the village. "Only my joke, James Naylor," she cried, looking back to where he stood, sullenly watching her. "I never

"ONLY MY JOKE, JAMES NAYLOR!" SHE CRIED.

meant what I said. Understand now, once and for all, I will never marry an old man like you." And the evening breeze carried to the brooding man her light laughter as she disappeared from view.

The village had long ago expressed the opinion that James Naylor was going "dotty." The wiseacres of the parish, sitting at nights in the taproom of the King Alfred's Head, watched him intently from their several corners and shook their heads with an air of ineffable sagacity when, his pint of beer finished, he would bid them a sulky "good-night" and retire to his cottage home His manner had certainly been strange since he had encountered Lydia Summers at a local festival given by a farmer in the district, and had, in defiance of the sneers and nudges of the younger men, begged that comely maiden to dance with him. She had lightly consented in order to tease her younger and more eligible admirers, and Naylor had expressed his admiration in terms which left no doubt as to the state of his feelings. "Silly old cuckoo!" said the young fellows, "kidding himself he's in love with that Summers girl, when she don't think any of us even are good enough for her."

James Naylor was fifty-one years of age at this time, and some years before had married an old woman thirty years his senior and who had the additional disadvantage of being wholly deaf, partly lame, and half blind. But Mrs. Naylor had a few pounds in saving, and on the principle that "she was not likely to last long," James was persuaded to ask the old woman to marry him, a proposition to which she willingly consented. Naylor had been rather religiously inclined and was a persona grata at the local chapel; but his rather strict views appeared to undergo some modification about this period, and he was the object of some concern to the unco' guid of the village, who began to look upon the faithful James as a confirmed backslider. Wherever he could meet the girl Summers he went; wherever he could throw himself across her path he did. Her pale, Madonna-like face attracted him strangely, and though nearly three times her age, he fell in love with her. Once in a spirit of playful mischief the girl had promised to become his wife in the event of Mrs. Naylor's death, and though she attached no importance to the lightly-spoken words and had speedily forgotten them, the man viewed them in a much more serious light, and fully intended that she should keep her word. He had thrown out veiled hints that his wife might soon leave him at liberty to marry someone else, and suggestions that Lydia should, at a decent interval, keep her promise and "become his number two."

Naylor lived at a cottage in the main street of Elsing, his neighbours on either side being two brothers named Isbell. In the course of the evening of Sunday, September 27, 1863, he was heard making a great noise and disturbance in his house, calling out "Oh! my Heavenly Father! my blessed Father!" and conducting himself in an extraordinary manner, for which there was no apparent cause. He had met the girl Summers by the gate of the churchyard that morning and had again pressed her to keep her promise in the event of the sudden death of his aged wife. The girl was so alarmed by his wild and incoherent manner and threatening aspect that she agreed to all he said, and in order to escape from him promised to accede to his desires. This appears to have strangely affected the amorous Naylor, who went to the public-house and drank a good deal more than he was accustomed to. So great was the noise he made on his return home that he was remonstrated with by a Mr. Matthews, a farmer in the district, and this seems to have somewhat calmed and quieted him. At any rate, he became much more self-possessed and passed the evening quietly at home with his wife. On the Monday the latter went to Mr. Matthews and requested him as a favour to take care of some money which she had reserved for the rent, stating as a reason her fear that her husband would get hold of it. Nothing unusual was noticed in Naylor's appearance or behaviour throughout the day, and in the evening he and his wife were seen sitting together in their front garden on apparently the best of terms. But the man's mind was still harping on Lydia Summers and her absurd promise, and it is nearly certain that he had determined to murder his wife if opportunity offered. Their neighbours, the Isbells, retired to rest at half-past nine, after which Mrs. Naylor was heard talking to her husband and asking him "if he wasn't coming to bed?" A light was seen burning in their bedroom at ten o'clock, and then all was quiet within.

About half-past ten Isbell was awoke from his first slumber by his wife, who declared that she had been disturbed by strange sounds coming from next door, and "that there Naylor has gone mad, I do believe," she added as her husband got up and listened. A loud shriek fell upon their affrighted ears, and then they distinctly heard the voice of old Mrs. Naylor crying "Don't hurt me, James!" or words to that effect. Another and even more alarming scream followed and a rumbling noise succeeded, as of some person being rolled or dragged downstairs. Then came the sound of a heavy fall—then another shriek, and then absolute silence for some time. Towards morning Naylor was heard moving about the bedroom and talking to himself in a strange and incoherent manner.

In spite of these "dismal portents of the night," the Isbells made little or no attempt to ascertain their cause; but they did relate to one or two of the neighbours what they had overheard, and when nothing was seen of Naylor the next morning and the house remained closed, the Elsing inhabitants began to be seriously alarmed. A small crowd gathered together outside the cottage, and Burrowes, the local constable, called upon Naylor to open the door. That worthy at once looked out of the bedroom window and stated that he was unable to let them in, as he had not the key. It was then decided to break open the door, and, this being done, a horrid spectacle confronted the intruders.

At the foot of the stairs lay the dead body of the poor old woman, partially doubled up, with her night-dress in disorder and extensive injuries on various parts of the head and arms. One leg was broken just above the ankle, and blood lay all around and upon the body, which had evidently been dragged downstairs from the upper chamber. In that room was a great quantity of blood, and sitting on a chair in the midst of it was the wretched husband, who seemed in a dazed and stupefied condition. He was immediately seized, and offered no resistance; but it is recorded that he muttered, "She'll marry me now, she'll marry me now," as the constables led him away. Thus did Lydia Summers's joking promise culminate in tragedy.

Mr. George Taylor, a surgeon, of Mattishall, conducted the post-mortem examination, and stated later, when giving evidence before the magistrate, that the deceased had two ribs broken on one side and six on the other. Great violence had been used, and the blows on the head had evidently been inflicted with the blood-stained poker which was found in the bedchamber when searched by the police. The money which the poor old woman had so carefully concealed from her husband, amounting to £2 17s. 6d., was found secreted in a portion of her dress.

Whether James Naylor was really insane or whether he only feigned being so in order to escape the consequences of his dreadful act has never been determined; but it is certain that he was never put upon trial for the crime. Death took a hand in the game—and won! While awaiting trial for the wilful murder of his wife he died in Norwich Castle on November 27, 1863, after an illness of only two or three days. "The Times" remarked, in allusion to this event, "The murder was attended with circumstances of great barbarity, but as Naylor did not appear to be in a thoroughly sound state of mind, it is doubtful whether, even assuming that he had been convicted, the extreme sentence of the law would ever have been carried out."

But Lydia Summers has always maintained that he was quite sane, and to the day of her death she regretted that foolish promise to James Naylor.

The Lawyer's Retort.

In the year 1786 John Adams, the well-known lawyer, when dining at Clapham, met a young doctor who prided himself on his wit. He attempted to amuse himself and the company by asking the lawyer if he knew the immense distance it was to heaven. It was, said he, so many millions of diameters of the solar system, and a cannon-ball would be so many thousand years in reaching there. "I don't know the distance nor the time," replied the lawyer; "but I do know this, that it will not take you one millionth part of the time to go to hell."

Curran and the Fleas.

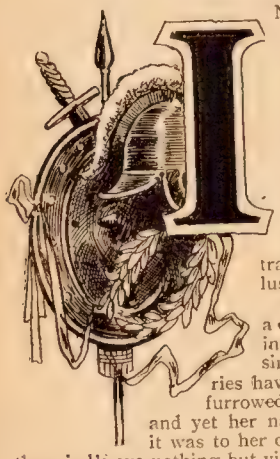
Curran's pet aversion was a flea, and this will not seem extraordinary when it is remembered that these vermin seemed to show him peculiar hostility. "If they infest a house," he said, "they always flock to my bedchamber when they hear that I am going to sleep there."

He was once dreadfully tormented in this way at Carlow, and on making complaint in the morning to the woman of the house, he said, "Madam, they were in such numbers, and seized upon my carcase with so much ferocity, that if they had been unanimous and all pulled one way they must have dragged me out of bed entirely."

The World's Worst Woman

THE TRAGEDY OF MESSALINA, THE EMPRESS OF A THOUSAND SINS.
A.D. 41-45.

"You must forget to be a woman!
—SHAKESPEARE, "Cymbeline," Act II., Sc. 4.



IN the columns of this journal—an historical and illuminative record of all notorious crimes and criminals—it is most fitting that Messalina, wife of Claudius, and empress of harlots, should find an important place. No record of murder is complete without her portrait, no chronicle of vice adequate unless it in some way (albeit the majority them are unmentionable) traces the history of Messalina's lusts and passions.

What a fate was hers! What a destiny! Her name is stamped into eternity the embodiment of sin in woman. Nineteen centuries have crept over this old world's furrowed face since Messalina died; and yet her name is as significant to us as it was to her contemporaries, and calls up to the mind's eye nothing but visions of vice, abominable lusts, and ruthless passions.

I doubt not, my good reader, that you, as well as the writer of these words, have an interest in this woman, a curiosity to know the manner of her life, to probe into the secrets of that bosom which nourished the fires of hell, and, above all, a desire to look upon her face, in very truth the face of Sin.

Yes, we are both in a measure tired of the dun-coloured crimes of to-day, the sordid tragedies of modernity; so we will journey together, good reader, to Messalina's Rome, and there, conducted by Tacitus* (prince of historians, and most courteous of guides), will see this woman for ourselves, this strange, unforgettable, glowing creature of the purple passions and the scarlet sins.

Messalina was the wife of Claudius, Emperor of Rome, a weak-natured man, ruled by his favourites. These favourites, or Ministers, were for the most part the parasites and temporary lovers of the emperor's wife, so it is easy to see that in reality the country and its vast dependencies were ruled by Messalina's smile.

We enter Rome (always conducted by the amiable Tacitus) at a time when Messalina is at the height of her power. As we traverse the narrow streets of the great city, we see that the population is disturbed in some way; popular indignation makes itself apparent on all sides. We inquire the cause of the general excitement of Tacitus, who knows everything.

"The people are excited because one of their favourite generals, Valerius Asiaticus, is being tried for his life."

"And what is the cause?"

"It is said that he is guilty of corrupting the soldiery."

"But you smile, Tacitus. Is this true?"

"For my part, I think not. But Asiaticus is guilty of a greater crime than corrupting the soldiers."

"Ah! what?"

"He has offended Messalina."

"In what way?"

"In two ways. He has taken to himself a new mistress—Poppea, the wife of Scipio. Also, he owns the gardens of Lucullus."†

"But how can this——?"

"Well, Asiaticus was by command for some time the lover of Messalina. Now she longs for nothing so much as his death. Poppea will die also."

We are now approaching the scene of trial. We shoulder our way through the seething multitude, and find that the prisoner is arraigned in no ordinary courthouse, but is being tried in Messalina's private chamber. She seeks diversion, and has it brought to her doors. We push past the guards and enter the apartment. The scene is a striking one.

The chamber, or hall, is sumptuously furnished; statues and vases abound on all sides; low couches, covered with skins and soft cushions, are arranged against the frescoed walls. The room is pervaded with a strange sweet scent, fresh flowers strew the marble floors, and barefooted slaves slip silently about attending to their mistress's wants. Truly a strange scene for a trial!

At one end of the apartment, between two armed centurions, stands the prisoner—a fine, stalwart man, with an unflinching eye and erected head. A stern, commanding, heroic figure, bronzed by Asiatic suns, and tempered by long campaigns through frost and fire, Asiaticus, the Roman general, pleads his cause before the queen of harlots. At last we see her in the flesh—Messalina.

The tall, wonderfully beautiful woman, lying on the couch, favourites, senators, and slaves hovering on her lightest word.

She is clad in a loose, filmy robe, half-disclosing the slow pulsations of the smoothly-carven bosom. Her ebon-black hair falls in luxuriant abundance about her dazzling white shoulders. Her robe is arranged so as to reveal the small, pearly feet and the slender ankle. Her arms, sculptured to perfection, are adorned with a thousand jewels and bracelets of gold.

But the face—yes, it is beyond description; we cannot describe but only hint at her miraculous beauty. The great, deep-lidded eyes, tremulous with passion, the fair cheeks, the smooth brow, and the rose-red mouth. The long lips are continually moving, caressing one another, and trembling in that terrible smile.

The face holds one in a trance; it draws one with a strange, undeniable fascination. Who would not barter eternity for one long kiss of those serpent lips? Who would not sell his soul to the myrmidons of eternal fury for that great white, throbbing bosom, for the loveliness of those miraculous arms? Oh, demon with the angel's face! oh, loveliness that hides the heart of hell! who can withstand or deny the supremacy of thy dreadful beauty? But the trial waits. Asiaticus is pleading his cause. He denies all accusations; he is a soldier, plain and blunt, whose only argument is that he has bled for his country's worth. His wounds are more eloquent than words. There is a simple pathos about all he says, a pathos adherent to all sincerity. Even Messalina is touched. Look! two large tears grow in the great dark eyes, and slip down upon her cheeks like dewdrops falling on a wild pink rose. Messalina is enjoying herself immensely. She loves to weep. She toys with sorrow as with a child, and nothing affords her such delicate enjoyment as witnessing pain and extremity of grief. She rises from her couch, beckons to her slaves, and glides towards the door. As she moves her beautiful body ripples and falls into curves and contours, her every motion is the perfection of grace.

A fat, ungainly man, robed in a white toga,* hastens towards her side. This is Vitellius,† who is accounted a great man in the state, because he always carries one of Messalina's discarded shoes in his bosom, and kisses it openly in the public places.

"Do not let him escape, Vitellius!" whispers Messalina in a voice breathing music.

"He shall die!" answers the sycophant, and returns to the scene of trial.

Messalina is escorted to her litter, wherein she is conveyed to the baths.

"He is so brave, and yet he must die!" she murmurs; and then, forgetting all about the matter, resigns herself to the luxury of the Roman bath.

Meanwhile, Asiaticus is, of course, condemned to death. His mistress, Poppea, terrified at the thought of the unnamable tortures which she must suffer at the hands of Messalina, has taken her own life. So the matter ends, and two more lives are added to the vast lists of Messalina's victims.

Asiaticus, on account of the great services he has rendered the state, pleads, and is granted the right, to die by his own hands. He is escorted to his villa in the gardens of Lucullus, and prepares his own funeral pile.‡ He regards this critically.

"Take it farther away," he says presently to his servants, "or else the smoke will spoil the foliage of the trees."

He opens his veins with a little knife, and creeps silently

* Tacitus. A Roman historian of great fame, who lived practically in the Age of Messalina. The eleventh book of his works is devoted to her story.
† A Roman park.

* A Roman cloak.
† The history of this notorious glutton has before appeared in "Famous Crimes."
‡ In Rome the bodies of the dead were invariably cremated.

to sleep. Messalina takes possession of the great, richly-blossoming gardens an hour after his death. She views the burning pile, and expresses gratification at his forethought for the trees which are now hers.

Whilst she is taking her first view of her new possessions word is brought that the Emperor Claudius desires her presence. Messalina obeys with a bad grace, for she is not patient under a husband's commands.

She finds the emperor in the Palace of the Cæsars, surrounded by generals and in company with his chief favourite, Narcissus. Messalina hardly notices this man. He is a thin, ill-favoured personage, with a cold eye, whose presence does not please her. Perhaps, also, a certain indefinable foreboding tells her that in some way this Narcissus shall accomplish her final ruin.

Claudius informs his wife that he is about to take a journey, the political aspect of affairs necessitating his presence in Ostia. He will be away for some months.

Messalina receives this news with tearful eyes and a joyous heart. She throws herself into Claudius's arms, and kisses him farewell. She will now have freedom to prosecute a scheme which has for long been in her mind. Messalina

"He shall die!" answered Vitellius.

has grown tired of wallowing in the sensual pleasures which have for so long delighted her. Her voluptuous soul cries out for new joys.

There had been a time when nothing delighted her so much as to single out a handsome slave or citizen from the crowd, and command him to attend her for a single night. The next day, if the unfortunate object of her passion was a slave, he was tortured to death in her presence, and if he was a powerful citizen, he was sent home to his wife. But at last this amusement palled upon the empress, her insatiate appetite hungered for fresh banquets. She grew tired of slaves, freedmen, and "loves of a night"; she grew fretful and querulous, and at last she determined to try love. As yet, this woman, who had revelled in every lust imaginable, had never experienced a throb of love, and so, although she possessed all other things this world can provide, she longed for the one denied object.

And now, Claudius being absent—though, truth to tell, the emperor had always been blind to her adulteries and assassinations—Messalina is free to woo the god of love. Several times whilst being borne through the streets on her litter she has noticed a handsome young Roman of patrician family. Several times she has also seen him in the emperor's retinue. She finds that he is always present in her thoughts, and disturbs her dreams. She learns that his name is Caius Silius, and that he is generally accounted the handsomest man in all Rome, and also that he is married to a noble patrician lady, Julia Silana.

In all her life—a life which comprises a long series of passions—Messalina has never felt such a desire of possession as she experiences for Silius. She watches him in the streets, all his movements are carefully reported to her by watchful slaves, and she is never tired of hearing his praises spoken and his fame chronicled by her sycophantic favourites. It is only when someone is found bold enough to mention Silius's beautiful young wife that Messalina's brow gathers in anger. On these occasions she will become furious, writhe on her couch like a person possessed by frenzy, weep wildly, and spend her fury in curses and lamentations.

The first meeting between Messalina and Silius is noteworthy. The handsome young Roman is summoned by the empress to the palace. His wife falls upon his shoulder and weeps. Is not her husband the handsomest man in the city? Is not the character of Messalina's summonses well known to everybody? Surely she has a right to weep.

Silius laughs away her fears, and betakes himself to the empress. He is conducted towards her apartment, where he finds her alone. She is lying on a couch, and, as it is summer time, naught hides her figure but a loose white gown.

Silius falls on his knees to kiss her hands, which she has extended, and before his lips touch the pearl-pale fingers, they are withdrawn. Silius is bidden to approach nearer.

"When Cæsar is in Rome we see you often," she says, with tears in her eyes. "Cæsar's wife is neglected."

Fearing her displeasure, Silius, on his knees, vows that he meant no discourtesy, and that he values her favour beyond all the treasure of the world.

So the comedy works itself out to its natural end, which is the utter abasement of Silius before Messalina. It is only when matters take a tragic turn that we again take up the story.

Messalina, having become the avowed mistress of Silius, flaunts their adulterous intercourse before the eyes of the Roman populace. Her extravagances are so terrible that Rome is shocked. Rome, the most corrupt, vicious, and debased city in the world, is shocked! Verily, Messalina did not pass into history for nothing!

Silius and the Empress are seen daily in their litters, parading the streets and taking the baths. At last Julia Silana, the unhappy wife of Silius, is divorced from her husband by order of Messalina, whose passion has swollen to such frenzy that she must have her paramour entirely to herself. More than this, all the personal servants, attendants and slaves appertaining to Claudius in his capacity of Cæsar (Emperor) who had remained in Rome whilst their master was in Ostia are by Messalina's orders transferred to the house of Silius. Messalina herself lives there and sleeps there, and to that abode she has caused to be removed the emperor's treasures, statues, and works of art, many of which latter belong not personally to Claudius, but are part of the inheritance of the Cæsarship (practically the Crown jewels).

The matter has now become a public scandal. The privileges, the appanages, and the servants of Claudius Cæsar have been transferred to the house of Silius, where Messalina, the wife of Claudius, lies in Silius's arms and calls him lord and master. Who then, cried the people, is Cæsar? Claudius, who was last heard of in Ostia, or Silius, who possesses all the outward signs of imperial dictatorship in Rome?

Silius himself is not unaware of the danger of his position. Should Claudius return he is a dead man. What is to be done? He determines upon a bold plan of action. To marry Messalina, publicly seize the city, and declare himself emperor.

Messalina agrees to this scheme, not that she cares who is emperor, but because the act of going through the marriage service with Silius whilst Claudius still lives has in it a pleasing sense of novelty. Besides which, the woman is drunk with passion, satiated with lust, and can no longer live without the excitement of constant enterprise and change. Soon the entire city is astounded by the public announcement of the marriage of Messalina with Silius. What does it mean? Is Claudius dead, or are the empress and her lover mad? Crowds, drawn by curiosity and wonderment, flock to witness the ceremony. The priests are there in all their mystic splendour, and the vestal virgins are there praying for the goodwill of the gods. The pathways are strewn with rose-leaves, youths carry myrtle before Silius and his bride; slaves, servants, favourites and friends garbed in the height of splendour. Messalina clad as a

virgin, in white robes, and crowned with lilies, is publicly united to Silius, who is proclaimed abroad as her husband.

The crowds shout, flowers are flung, wine flows freely, dancing and singing obtain in the public places, and the magnificent gardens of Lucullus are for this day thrown open to the populace. There is revelry all through the night, the sacred statues are wreathed in garlanded blossoms, and all is public festival.

We leave the revellers, and follow a party of horsemen who are riding at utmost speed from Rome to Ostia. These are the emissaries of Narcissus, who, it will be remembered, was Claudius's chief minister. When leaving with his master for Ostia, Narcissus had left in Rome several trustworthy lieutenants to watch the movements of Messalina and bring him word of all that took place in the capital during his absence. They bring him the news of Messalina's "marriage" with Silius.

"At last she is delivered into my hands!" cries the minister.

Now in the camp at Ostia are two women, the mistresses

"DIE BY YOUR OWN HAND, IF YOU WISH IT!"

of Claudius, named Calphurnia and Cleopatra. It is to these women that Narcissus hastens, states the facts of the case, and prevails upon them to inform Claudius, representing that by the downfall of Messalina they will gain greater influence over the emperor.

"Once she is dead, you may fight for him between yourselves," says Narcissus, and leaves them to their task.

The two women seek out Claudius, who is engaged upon affairs of the State. Calphurnia throws herself upon her knees before him.

"Messalina has married Silius, Cæsar!" she cries, "and he is now master of Rome!"

Claudius is too dazed by the news to speak. The men who were present at the ceremony now add their testimony to Calphurnia's. Cæsar sends for Narcissus.

"Know you Cæsar," cries the minister, "that you are in a state of divorce. In the face of the soldiery, the people and the senate, Messalina has espoused Silius, and unless you act with despatch her husband is Emperor of Rome."

Realising his position, Cæsar summons his captains, the prætorian cohorts are secured, and a march on Rome ordered. Geta, the general of the prætorians, has at one time, like many other noble Romans, been a lover of Messalina. Fearing treachery, Narcissus takes his place.

Meanwhile there is great revelry in the capital. It being autumn and the Feast of Bacchus (the god of wine), in the house of Silius there is given a representation of the vintage. Wine-vats flow on all sides, and, crowned with ivy and pine cones, the friends of Messalina dance in drunken fury around the vine. Laurel and asphodel are strewn on all sides. Women, carrying swords, cymbals, and brazen serpents, career round and round in the frenzied dance. Messalina herself, lightly clad, with dishevelled hair, leads the revel with Silius, and the twain, with arms intertwined and heads thrown back, dance in mad ecstasy to the wildest strains of music. All drink from golden goblets, goblets in which the choicest wines in Rome swim and overflow.

Valeno, a friend of Silius, pretends that he is a monkey, and climbs to the topmost branch of the highest tree in the gardens. Panting with her exertions, Messalina turns her wine-stained face up to him, and asks him what he sees.

"A great storm blowing up from Ostia," he replies, slides down from the tree, and creeps away.

A sudden hush falls upon the assembly. The drunken become sober in a moment. Messengers hurry into the gardens bearing the news of Claudius's advance with the army. Messalina's favourites and slaves begin to steal away. Presently the great hall and the gardens are deserted, but for Messalina and Silius. The revellers have gone, the vine droops, the wine vats flow undisturbed. A great silence pervades everything. Silius at last flies to make his peace with death, for he determines to die rather by his own hand than by the swords of Claudius.

Messalina seeks her mother. Mother? Yes, even Messalina had a mother—a woman named Lepida, whom she had cruelly used during the reign of her prosperity, to whom she flew in the hour of her abasement. She has not a slave or a servitor left, for they are all flying with what treasure they can carry to far off safety.

She determines to go out alone herself and meet Claudius. Can she but see him, all is saved. Also she leaves her two children, Britannicus and Octavia, with Lepida, charging them to run forth and embrace their father on his entry into the city. She traverses the streets alone that night until she reaches the gardens of Lucullus (her property), when she employs the cart which carries the refuse from the gardens to drive her towards Claudius's army. A strange antagonism, a woman in a manure cart meeting the army of Rome! But,

ah, those eyes, that bosom, and that smile are weapons stronger than swords; and Messalina is not defeated until her beauty is obliterated, until she is dead. So thinks wily Narcissus, who determines that Claudius shall not set eyes upon his queen. He meets the cart in person.

"Tell the emperor to hear the mother of Octavia and Britannicus," cries Messalina.

Narcissus smiles, informs her that the emperor is with the rearguard, and turns the cart back to Rome. Baffled and beaten so far, Messalina still hopes much from the encounter between Claudius and his children. This, too, is intercepted by Narcissus, who removes the children from the emperor's reach.

Despairing, Messalina hurries to her little villa in the gardens of Lucullus.

Claudius enters Rome, is conducted by Narcissus to Silius's house, and views his own dishonoured treasures lumbering the halls of his wife's lover. Enraged as he is by this spectacle, he will not order Messalina to instant execution. The witchery of her beauty clings to him still, and he shrinks from her death. Narcissus notices this, and is perturbed lest Messalina, in spite of everything, should finally triumph. He determines to save himself and the empire by a bold move. Rushing out of the palace, he shouts to Eudos, his lieutenant, "Forward, Eudos; the emperor has ordered the instant execution of Messalina."

Eudos and a company of prætorians hasten with drawn swords to the gardens of Lucullus.

Messalina is there awaiting her fate. Dishevelled and despairing, she is lying on the ground amidst the flowers, pressing her face to the very earth. Her mother, Lepida, sits by her side, weeping quietly, with her trembling hands caressing her dishonoured daughter's hair.

"Life! life! I must live!" cries the woman on the ground, tearing the flowers in the agony of her despair.

"Daughter, death cometh to us all."

"Death is so cold!"

"Pray to die a queen."

The quick tramp of advancing soldiers is heard.

"They are coming—death is coming!" sobs Messalina.

Her beautiful body is convulsed with sobs as she lies writhing amidst the tall grass praying for life and mercy. A great shout is heard beyond the gates, and then, with mighty blows, the barred gates are broken down.

Struggling to her feet, the wretched woman tears the robe from her bosom.

"Ye gods," she cries, "I have not prayed to you nor made you lawful sacrifice. Help me, I pray—grant me to live!"

The soldiers rush in upon her, Eudos, Narcissus's lieutenant, at their head. He presents her with his sword.

"Die by your own hand, if you wish it," he says.

She presses the gleaming blade lightly to her bare breast, and then, with a shriek of horror, casts it from her, and drops shuddering to the ground.

The soldiers close in upon her, and bury their swords in her body.

A great silence falls upon the beautiful gardens of Lucullus—a silence only broken by the sound of a mother weeping over the bleeding corpse of her dead child.

And so she weeps on into the twilight, when news comes from the emperor that he grants her the dead woman's body for burial.

It is all over. Let us put Tacitus back upon the shelf, good reader, for the tragedy of Messalina is told. Ancient Rome, city of pomp and pleasure, fades from us like a mirage of departed splendour. We return to modernity—the reader and the writer—not sorry, perhaps, for our excursion into the past. The ashes of nineteen centuries lie over the scattered bones of those we saw and talked with in Rome. They are all dead; dead, and for the most part forgotten—all but Messalina, and her name, branded with the fires of hell into eternity, remains as ever the symbol of a thousand sins.

The Lawyer Was Silenced.

A London lawyer was once examining a mine in Cornwall, and while coming up the shaft observed a friend who was a clergyman, standing at the top watching his progress. The man of law, thinking to say something smart, asked the parson, "Doctor, as you know all things from the surface to the centre, pray can you tell me this: How far is this pit from the other one in the infernal regions?" To which the clergyman replied: "Well, I cannot tell you the exact distance in miles, but if you let go your hold you'll be there in a minute."

The JUDGE and JURY

PART IX.

HOW EVIDENCE IS TO BE GIVEN.

READERS may be glad to be reaching the end of this treatise as to the Rules of Evidence, and they now know that any evidence tendered must—

(i.) Be relevant to the issue.
(ii.) Be the best evidence procurable.
(iii.) Not be within the rule rejecting hearsay evidence.
(iv.) Not (except in the case of experts) be a mere expression of opinion.
(v.) If it be a confession or admission, be legally admissible.
(vi.) If it be a document, be legally and properly put in evidence. Further no document or other thing must be used for the purposes of the trial that has not been properly verified.
(vii.) Any witnesses called must be legally qualified to give evidence.
(viii.) No document must be handed to a witness to refresh his memory except such as are legally admissible for that purpose.

Finally, the examination of witnesses must be fairly and properly conducted.

It may seem to be a dangerous thing to talk disparagingly of barristers. For selected barristers grow up into being judges, and can help a jury into finding a layman guilty, and may then sentence that layman to "time." We have dealt with the privileges of witnesses. Counsel seem to have made for themselves privileges of their own, one of which is immunity from being given twenty-one days' imprisonment for contempt of court. At certain General Courts Martial the ejaculations of counsel have been contempt of court. Counsel have a knack of "trying it on." When one misbehaves badly, he gets "ragged" by his brethren in a young-ladylike manner, and there the matter ends, unless prompt action by Mr. Ernest Terah Hooley shall have rendered "another shocking bar ragging scandal" unnecessary.

The examination of a witness by the person who calls him is termed his examination, direct examination, or examination-in-chief. On this examination the question must be relevant to the issue; that is to say, it must relate to the matters in issue at the trial. A witness must not be compelled to answer any question with respect to which he is entitled to claim privilege, and the witness must be dealt with in such a way that his honest belief is obtained from him. No angry "Stand down, sir," should induce any witness to leave the box if he thinks that his language is not being properly understood.

Accordingly, a witness must not in examination-in-chief be asked "leading questions" on any material point—that is to say, questions suggesting the answer which the person putting the question wishes or expects to receive, or questions suggesting disputed facts to which witness is to testify. For instance, a witness must not be asked: "Did the prisoner put down a sovereign and ask for a packet of cigarettes?" but "What did the prisoner do?" If it were not for this rule a lying witness might be made to give any evidence that was wanted. Of course, it would be but mere waste of time to enforce this rule when the questions asked do not refer to any disputed point, although the information that is sought for is material to the issue. But directly the questions begin to deal with any contested topic, or any point nearly connected therewith, this rule should be always rigidly enforced, and no question should be allowed in a form which suggests to a witness what reply is desired from him, or which admits of a conclusive answer "Yes" or "No." There may be some questions which do not suggest an answer, but merely direct the attention of the witness to the subject on which he

is being interrogated. It is always easier to say whether "counsel is playing the game" than to lay down a hard and fast distinction between what is a leading question and what is not.

A man is charged with the murder of another by stabbing. The body has been found at the upper end of a certain street. A witness is called to speak to the circumstances under which the blow was struck. There is no objection to asking the witness:

"Do you remember August 12?" and

"Were you in North Street about noon on that day?"

Those questions look like leading questions, but they are merely introductory. Indeed, if the prisoner's defence was that he only struck the blow in self-defence, there would be no objection to going a little further, and asking:

"Did you see the deceased and the prisoner there?"

But henceforth all leading questions should be avoided, and the examination should be continued more or less after this strain:

"In what part of the street were the prisoner and the deceased when you first saw them?"

"How far were you from the prisoner and the deceased?"

"Tell us in your own words exactly what occurred."

It would be highly improper to substitute for the first question:

"Were they at the upper end of the street when you first saw them?"

It is obvious that it might be very important in settling whether there had been a long quarrel or scuffle to know whether they had moved far from the place where the witness first saw them to the place where the body was found. We need hardly state that it would not be the thing to ask:

"Did you see the prisoner sneak up behind the deceased and stab him with a knife?"

A question like that suggests an answer that implies that the blow was not struck in self-defence. Similarly, if the defence is an alibi, it is wrong to ask a question suggesting the answer that witness saw the prisoner on the spot. You must not ask:

"Did you see the deceased and the prisoner there?" but:

"Did you see anyone there?"

"Can you identify them?"

"Can you identify anyone in court as having been there?"

If an answer cannot be obtained in any other way, it is fair, after the witness has said that he saw some persons there, and that he should know them again, to ask: "Did you see that person there?"

The rule in these cases is that the attention of a witness who has alluded to any person or thing may be called to any person or thing for the purpose of identification, and the witness may be asked directly whether that is the person or thing to which he referred. But in practice this should only be done after examination in the usual way has failed to elicit any answer. When any article such as a revolver, a waist-belt, or a document is produced in court for the purpose of identification, the witness may be asked such questions as:

"Do you recognise it?"

"Did you see anything done with it?" but such questions as:

"Did you see the soldier strike the civilian with the buckle-end of that waist-belt?" or:

"Did you see the prisoner altering that document?" would be glaringly wrong. There is always the exception when one side calls a witness, who appears to be hostile; counsel may say: "My lord, this witness appears to be acting as a hostile witness. I must ask your lordship's permission to treat him as a hostile witness, and to ask him leading questions." For all that, as the witness has been called as a witness of truth, this counsel must not ask him any questions tending to vilify himself.

At the conclusion of the examination-in-chief the opposite side cross-examines the witness. In cross-examination leading and irrelevant questions may be put and must be answered, as the cross-examining side is authorised to test the examination-in-chief by every means in its power. An irrelevant question frequently puts a witness who has "got up" a story off his guard. In the Pigott case the notorious forger was asked to write down his own name, and then to write "hesitancy," a word which the witness misspelt, in the same way as he misspelt it in the "Parnell Forgeries." Questions may be put on cross-examination which tend to test the accuracy or the credibility of the witness, or to shake his credit, impeach his motives, or injure his character. Such questions, however, cannot be put on the examination-in-chief or re-examination.

All the same, questions must not be allowed which assume that facts have been proved which have not been proved, or that answers have been given contrary to the fact. Nor, though irrelevant questions may be put, should a witness be asked as to facts which, if admitted, would not affect the matter at issue nor the credibility of the witness. If the cross-examining counsel intends to bring evidence to contradict the evidence given by the witness, he should be required to put to the witness in cross-examination the substance of the evidence which he proposes to bring, and so give the witness an opportunity of retracting or explaining.

Witnesses have long been subject to blackguardly behaviour from brow-beating, bullying barristers, a fact that is recorded in print in the Manual of Military Law ("the right of asking questions merely to discredit, a right which has sometimes been seriously abused in civil courts"). The 92nd Rule of Procedure has been specially designed to keep barristers in their proper place when they are engaged in a case which is being heard by a court-martial.

Evidence cannot be given to contradict the answer of any witness to a question which only tends to shake his credit by injuring his character, except:

(a.) When the witness is asked whether he has ever been convicted of any felony or misdemeanour, and denies or refuses to answer;

(b.) When he is asked a question tending to show that he is not impartial;

(c.) When he has previously made inconsistent statements;

(d.) When he can be shown to be a notorious liar.

In (a) and (b) proof may be given of the truth of the facts suggested; (c) and (d) are dealt with below.

A witness may be asked whether he has on a previous occasion stated something relative to the issue and inconsistent with his present evidence. Time and place must be referred to definitely. If the witness denies the incident, proof may be given that he did, in fact, make it.

Any witness's credibility may be impeached by the opposite side who may produce evidence of persons who swear that, from their knowledge of the witness, they believe him unworthy of credit on oath. Such persons may not, on their examination-in-chief, give reasons for their belief. They may not say: "I saw him rob a church." or even "He is bad enough to rob a church." They may say: "He is in my opinion such a liar that he is not fit to be believed on oath." Such doubting Thomases may, however, be asked their reasons in cross-examination, and their answers may not be contradicted. When the credit of a witness is so impeached, the side which called the witness may call other witnesses to say that he is not a liar, but on the contrary a singularly truthful man!

At the conclusion of the cross-examination, the other side may, if it sees fit, re-examine the witness, but only as far as obtaining explanation of answers given in and matters referred to in the cross-examination. If permission be obtained for new matter to be dealt with in the re-examination, that evidence is subject to cross-examination.

A moral to be drawn is: "Speak the truth and shame the devil." Perjury is a misdemeanour only, but it is punishable with seven years' penal servitude. The "unfortunate nobleman" got two goes of seven years (to run consecutively) in one sentence. He must have told two lies!

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

R. T.—Yes. Eliza Ross was hanged in January, 1832, for "burking" Catherine Welsh.

L. T. B.—If you conceal the fugitive you are liable to imprisonment. Harbouring deserters is an offence.

TOMMY.—The Captain John Lancy, who was hanged at Execution Dock on January 7, 1754, for ship-burning, was a merchant skipper, and not a soldier.

PAT.—Hiring a murderer is a capital offence. For example, Dennis Delane died on the gallows because he hired a ruffian named Walsh to shoot a landlord.

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DAINTY NOVELS

ONE PENNY WEEKLY.

Printed and Published by HAROLD FURNISS, at Caxton House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London.

Sole Agents for the Colonies—GORDON & GOTCH, London; Melbourne; Sydney; Brisbane; Perth, W.A.; Wellington N.Z.; Christchurch, N.Z.; Cape Town & Durban, S.A.